

APPLE VS. FBI || BERNIE THE REALIST || RESCUING REFUGEES
THE EDITORS ROBERT ENGLISH KIA MISTILIS

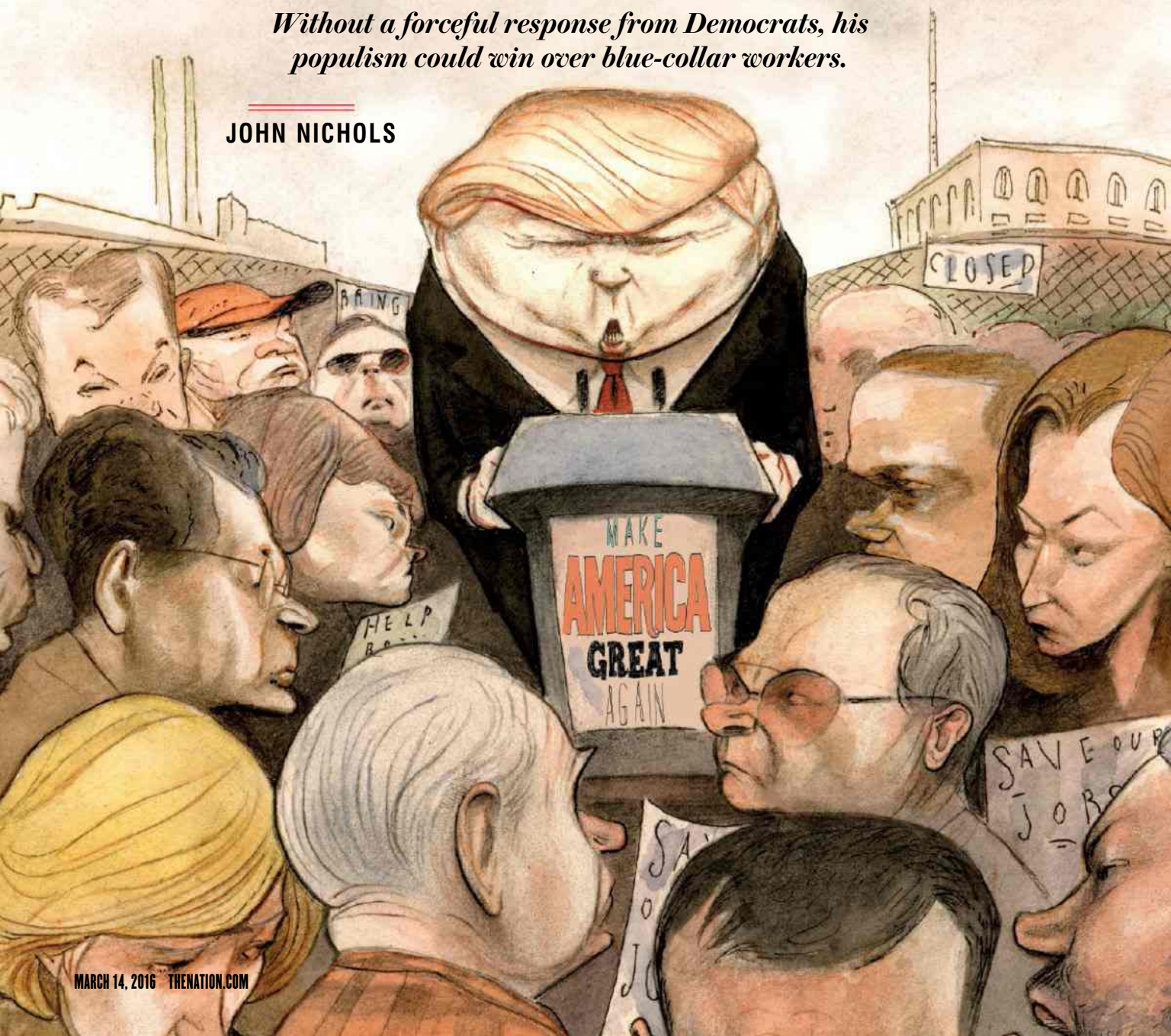
THE Nation.

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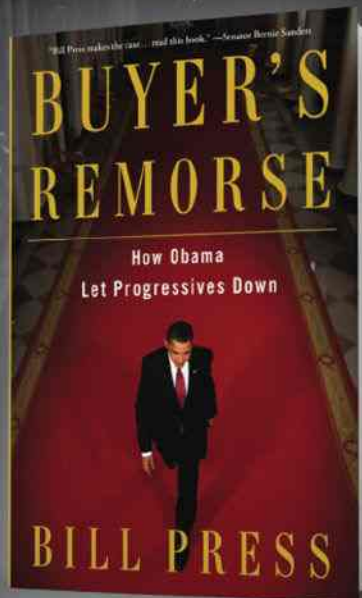
Donald Trump Is Dangerous

Without a forceful response from Democrats, his populism could win over blue-collar workers.

JOHN NICHOLS



Great uniter? Grave disappointment.



The prominent liberal syndicated radio and television host Bill Press concisely explains the many ways President Obama has failed to live up to either his promises or his progressive potential, leaving Democrats disillusioned on some of the issues that matter most.

Wherever books and ebooks are sold.



Southern Discomfort

☞ This story is a great look at South Carolina's politics ["South Carolina in Black and White," Feb. 22]. As a Connecticut Yankee who has lived and studied and worked in this state since 1970, I can second every one of D.D. Guttenplan's observations. Although South Carolina isn't as vicious as some of her Southern neighbors, the state is still all about race. Go out into the countryside, to some of the rural towns, and race simmers under the gossamer veil of civility, recognizable only as a wink and a spoken code. FRANK DOUGHERTY

What's Gender Got to Do With It?

Thanks to Katha Pollitt for expressing my thoughts about women supporting another woman for president ["Now I'm With Her," Feb. 22]. I, too, supported Barack Obama in 2008 because I thought it was far past time for Americans to see an African American as the leader of our nation. As with anything, there have been both good and bad consequences of that. It certainly has brought out a lot of inherent racism in our society and, in the process, forced us all to confront some of our biases. Until we elect a woman, we won't have to do the same about the basic misogyny in our culture.

I would have much preferred that *The Nation* remain neutral and was considering canceling my subscription for what I felt was the basic unfairness of [endorsing Bernie Sanders in the race]. Now I won't have to do that.... I saw a twentysomething on one of the news shows saying that electing Bernie is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, as if we've had so many opportunities to elect a woman as president. I've voted in every presidential election since 1968, and I don't recall a single one in my lifetime.

DONITA JONES
SACRAMENTO, CALIF.

In her recent article, Katha Pollitt refers with embarrassment to a statement that she signed in 2008, "Feminists for Peace and Obama." The clear implication is that she and presumably others had applied a double standard to the presidential candidacy of Hillary Clinton. Now, in 2016, she intends to undo that mistake by encouraging others to "put a collective thumb on the scale" on behalf of this particular woman, who is again seeking the highest office.

As one of the originators of "Feminists for Peace and Obama," I can affirm that no double standard was involved. It was drafted by feminist peace activists in New York, who from 2001 to 2004 had found Senator Clinton's office to be extraordinarily unresponsive to a list of concerns: the arbitrary incarceration of Muslim immigrants in the wake of 9/11, the waiving of the Geneva conventions in the establishment of Guantánamo, the authorization of military force in Iraq, the use of depleted uranium once the war began, the unconditional funding of an ongoing occupation. As a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, she might have played a constructive role, which she failed to do.

To be clear: On matters of substance, Senator Clinton's positions were distinctly "hawkish" as compared with several others in the New York congressional delegation; on matters of process, her office was unusually resistant to communication with peace advocates.

Of course, Clinton wasn't the only "liberal" senator to vote to authorize the use of military force in Iraq. But there was one crucial difference between Senator Clinton and all 99 of her colleagues: As the wife of the former president of the United States,

☞ Comments drawn from our website

letters@thenation.com

(continued on page 26)

Apple vs. the FBI

Apple and the FBI are engaged in a pitched battle over encryption, and we're Team Apple—for now. Over the past few years, the company has quietly added better encryption and security features to iOS, the iPhone's operating system. Today, even Apple doesn't have the key to information stored

only on your device, and couldn't look at it even if compelled by law. Your privacy is protected by technology. But the FBI wants Apple to build a version of iOS with weak security; specifically, it wants to use this alternative system to break into the phone of Syed Rizwan Farook, one of the San Bernardino shooters. The government insists that it will use this tool only once. Apple argues that this precedent could compromise millions of users in the United States and abroad. A federal judge has ordered the company to help the FBI, and Apple is appealing.

Apple, quite simply, is correct here: Once technology has a so-called back door installed, all kinds of people can walk in. If the US government can demand access, the Chinese government can do so as well; Apple exercises a soft market power to resist authoritarian demands, but it won't have a leg to stand on if the government of its own country compels access. As Nate Cardozo of the Electronic Frontier Foundation observed, "Authoritarian regimes around the world are salivating at the prospect of the FBI winning this order." And the more Apple creates systems to unlock phones for government agencies, the more vulnerabilities exist for hackers to exploit. In the end, this poses a threat to each of us. Right now, the information on our phones can be kept truly private—but if the FBI gets the technology it's demanding, the government may gain the ability to crack any phone in its possession.

The FBI appears to have made this case public (many other requests to Apple from the FBI have been filed under seal), indicating that it's interested in using the public terror around the San Bernardino case to put new precedents on the books. But Alex Abdo, staff attorney for the ACLU, points out that if the US government forces "Apple to degrade the security of its products, they're not actually going

to be helping the FBI when it comes to sophisticated criminals. Sophisticated criminals don't need intermediaries like Apple to secure their communications." The more obvious target would be petty criminals. Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus Vance has been supportive of the government's case because of the power it would give to a wide range of law-enforcement offices like his. Apple's new tool would be another mechanism for domestic state surveillance in an age when we already have plenty.

Why is Apple taking a stand? After Edward Snowden's revelations that American companies voluntarily shared customer data with the NSA, US corporations lost billions of dollars in foreign markets. Apple knows that its business depends on its reputation for safeguarding privacy. This means that Apple, for now, is an ally on privacy. The episode recalls a similar controversy in the 1990s: Phil Zimmerman invented PGP ("Pretty Good Privacy"), a protocol that encrypted information like credit-card numbers and e-mails, allowing for safe transfer over the Internet. That was crucial for companies entering into e-commerce. The Commerce Department prohibited the export of strong encryption at the behest of the Clinton administration, treating it as a potential weapon. Privacy activists protested. So did major corporations; they wouldn't be able to compete in global markets if consumers didn't trust their products. Cryptography was gradually deregulated under Clinton as law enforcement's fear of encryption lessened and First Amendment challenges won out. And at a 1999 meeting of the president's Export Council subcommittee on encryption, the undersecretary for export administration told the group, "We are asking ourselves: Are there things we can do to help e-commerce?"

Today, Apple is an ally, and we should support



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DC BY THE NUMBERS



1
Number of iPhones the Department of Justice initially said it wanted Apple to unlock

12
Number of iPhones the DOJ was later reported to be targeting

51%
People in favor of Apple unlocking the iPhone used in the San Bernardino shootings, versus 38 percent against

"At stake is the data security of hundreds of millions of law-abiding people... setting a dangerous precedent that threatens everyone's civil liberties."

Tim Cook,
Apple CEO

the company's challenge to the recent court order. But the regulation of encryption should not be determined by the courts and argued by self-interested corporations. Two House committees are planning hearings to address the issues raised by the Apple suit. Citizens can call their representatives to express support for privacy on their devices and security without backdoors. Today, a powerful corporate ally has offered us space in which to maintain our privacy—but without legislation, we may find ourselves locked out tomorrow.

Welcome to LA

"Working the extra board" in Hollywood.

When I was a younger man, I made an arrangement with Gray Line Tours that would allow me to drive in the evenings and on weekends (it was called "working the extra board"). Their business included tours of Marineland of the Pacific, Forest Lawn cemetery, Hollywood Park, and Universal Studios, as well as shuttling conventioners around downtown. Most of the time, however, I was punching the clock on the hugely popular tour of Hollywood and Beverly Hills. We dressed up like airline pilots from a Mel Brooks comedy.

Oddly, the company did not provide any information for the tours. There was a fixed route, of course, but otherwise new drivers were expected to purchase celebrity addresses and the tour "rap" from older drivers. But I was a tightwad, so I just winged it. I'd pick out a big house and lie about who lived there. Usually this was no problem, but now and then a veteran fan caught me. I remember one time exclaiming "Here she is—I Love Lucy! There's her house. We'll slow down so you can take photos." Then some lady in the back absolutely freaks out. "I've been on this tour enough times to know that's not Lucille Ball's house. She lives three blocks away."

Beverly Hills was no big deal. But driving the tourists from Iowa down Hollywood Boulevard was the most hallucinatory part of the job. This was Hollywood in the early '70s: post-flower power, post-Manson. The sidewalks teemed with runaway kids, teenage prostitutes (male and female), people raving, heroin addicts with two weeks to live—the absolute epicenter of human misery. It was an awful place, especially on the Hollywood at Night tour. I used to pull up around the corner from Grauman's Chinese and kick the tourists out to go venerate the footprints. I'd lock myself in the bus. I'd close the windows, saying to myself: "OK, zombies! You can't get me. Go eat the tourists!" The weird part is that the tourists would get out and, surrounded by misery, gasp, "Ava Gardner's footprints!" I mean, there would be someone lying naked or ODing, foaming at the mouth, and they'd walk over the body and say, "Oh! Victor McLaglen, I remember him!" They were

ecstatic, and I was mortified. Instead of being distressed by the huge moral discrepancy between the myth of Hollywood and its current reality, most of them only saw what had already been fixed in their minds. It was absolutely eerie and sent me right back to *The Day of the Locust*. The point that Nathanael West made, of course, is that the masses ultimately want to kill and devour, to cannibalize their celebrity gods.

Fortunately, there were some dramatic exceptions. The Longshoremen's Union used to bring tours of Japanese-American and Filipino-American sugarcane workers from Hawaii. I'd always get those tours. They were wonderful people, and they liked to hear stories and jokes. They were interested in history, including the tidbits of radical history. Then there were the guys I truly despised: the fortysomething drunk white conventioners with their libidos hanging out of their pants. These leering, hypocritical bastards automatically assumed that every Gray Line driver was a pimp (unfortunately, several were) who could set them up with a 15-year-old girl. It was all the more disgusting since you knew that most of these Babbitts were upstanding family men and Kiwanis members from some middle-sized city in the Midwest.

Gray Line had two kinds of buses. The normal tour bus was a secondhand American Eagle retired from Greyhound. But for shuttling conventioners and the like, we used ancient municipal transit buses without a luggage compartment, what we called "flat bottoms." We'd take sometimes six, seven, eight buses up to Universal Studios. Universal was fun because we didn't have to do anything. We just dropped the tourists off in the parking lot. The drivers would hang out together

Those cannibal tourists sent me right back to The Day of the Locust.

in one bus, sometimes passing a bottle back and forth. Half of them were pimping girls or selling shit out of the back of the buses. So one day we're sitting in my bus, and we see one of these buses slowly rolling by and picking up speed. Now buses, like heavy-duty trucks, have a "maxi brake"—looks like a big red button—that welds your wheels in place when you park. I guess the driver didn't realize that the huge Universal parking lot has a very slight slope. So his bus started rolling backwards, very slowly at first, then gaining speed. "Open the door, Mike!" the drivers shouted. I opened the door, let them out, and we all ran after the bus, but it was too late. We watched in a kind of fascinated horror as that old flat bottom just kept rolling down and then off the embankment onto the Hollywood Freeway.

MIKE DAVIS

Mike Davis, a Nation contributing editor, is a writer, historian, and political activist. His books include City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles, Ecology of Fear: Los Angeles and the Imagination of Disaster, and Planet of Slums. The text is an edited transcript from interviews that Jean Stein conducted for her book West of Eden, an oral history that focuses on five families in Los Angeles spanning most of the last century to the present. Copyright 2016 by Jean Stein. Reprinted by arrangement with Random House, a division of Penguin Random House LLC. All rights reserved.

Q&A SWOON

Caledonia Curry, a.k.a. Swoon, is among the most recognized street artists in the world. Her work is now in the permanent collection of the Museum of Modern Art.

She has also created projects with communities in New Orleans, Pennsylvania, and Haiti, as well as a floating city on rafts.

—Laura Flanders

Laura Flanders: Why street art?

Swoon: In 1999–2000, I was still in school and had a breakdown around painting, fine arts, and the role of art in our lives, and I started to create projects that would function differently. The first was a series of posters that happened outside in the street. It became a total obsession from there! There's this feeling that what you're going to make is a square that is for investment, that goes over a couch—and that's the whole of its life cycle. I needed to make something that's part of my life; that intersects with the city, how we live, how we perceive ourselves, how we occupy our spaces.... As an artist, I have a few different personalities. One needs alone time and to be creating in the studio; this other part of me needs to be working together with people. That's one of our deepest human needs—working together on things.

LF: What case do you make to funders and to communities to work together on an art piece?

S: I think that many of us are born into systems that are already in place. There's a sense of alienation from those systems

and from the physical world. I think that when we are creatively able to set our hands on something, and able to be a part of the small and creative decisions of making our place, we feel at home; we care about our home; we are able to feel more invested in it and take care of it. Giving people a creative outlet, to be part of having a say in what their city looks like, is part of a healthy community.

LF: How does it intersect with the discussion around [artists and] gentrification?

S: I think about it as going from the temporary to the long-term action. When I started wheat-pasting on the street, I was like: Put up a poster, leave. In Brad-dock, Pennsylvania, we have a group of artists working to save a church from demolition, but in so doing we're working on creating jobs for people locally to be a part of the re-creation. The actions aren't about pushing people out; the actions are about actually digging in deeply to who's here, what opportunities are needed.

LF: Talk about the New Orleans project.

S: People were leaving for Texas; people weren't coming back. A friend, who was afraid of the corporatization of the culture in the wake of so much leaving... asked me to work on this house

that was about to fall down next to his house. I was thinking about music and architecture and wonder and how those aspects of New Orleans culture are key. It started off as a playable musical installation, but between the dream and the realization, that original house actually fell down. The group that I worked with, New Orleans Airlift, reinvented that original idea into building new structures that would incorporate musicality.... When they pop up in different places in the city and people are allowed to interact with them—I don't really know quite how to describe it, but there's the very strange joy that's born out of the unlikelihood of those moments.

LF: You support the cultural boycott of Israel, part of BDS—the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions campaign. Why?

S: I have spent a very, very little

bit of time in Palestine. It's a response to hearing what is being asked. It's about trying to look at the history of cultural boycott, how it functioned in South Africa, how it could function now.

LF: A lot of city spaces today are described as “privately owned public space.” What's your take?

S: For me, the thing that pops into my mind is the cabaret laws: “They're from the '20s,” we thought. “It's not a big deal. Why are we so worried?” Then there was this huge crackdown. We can use these “public” spaces until a particular corporation doesn't agree with our agenda, and then all of a sudden they're not open. I think it's important to have real truth about what is public and what is civic and what is participatory. ■

There's a sense of alienation from the physical world. When we are creatively able to set our hands on something, we are able to feel more invested in it.

Adapted from Swoon's appearance on The Laura Flanders Show, on teleSUR English.



TAX AND SPEND

Big Benefits

Eric Alterman, at right, discusses the right-wing strategy of “working the refs,” focusing the media’s attention on the “size of government.” But for most people, the real issue is whether government spending improves their lives.

Here are a few of the scariest states in Europe by GOP standards—countries with high state spending (about half of GDP in each case) and generous public benefits.



Denmark

The country is known for its superb record on gender equality, fostered through social-democratic programs—so much so that famed pickup artist Roosh V wrote a book called *Don’t Bang Denmark*. The women were too independent for his taste.



France

The healthcare system here offers universal coverage and was ranked by the World Health Organization as the best-functioning in the world. France also spends less on healthcare per capita than the US due to gains in efficiency.



Sweden

College is free in Sweden, resulting in graduates with no crushing tuition-debt load. In the US, cumulative student debt is over \$1 trillion.

Eric Alterman



PBS Follows the Pack

Why are public broadcasters parroting right-wing talking points?

This season’s Republican debates have been characterized by an avalanche of purposeful and ideologically driven disinformation, sometimes fact-checked a day later but largely given a pass by moderators and political analysts. A recent case in point: When CBS’s John Dickerson challenged Ted Cruz’s fib regarding past Supreme Court nominees at the February 13 Republican face-off, Dickerson’s correction, not Cruz’s lie, became news. The Republican audience booed, because the facts themselves, alas, have a liberal bias, and Dickerson apologized.

But the debates are hardly the only place where the right has bullied the media into submission. No less important, though operating under the radar, is the framing of the issues: which ones matter and what solutions are defined as “responsible.” The Bernie Sanders campaign has fought to expand America’s ideological bandwidth, but it must battle decades of rightward drift to do so. Armed with hundreds of millions—possibly billions—of dollars from funders like Richard Mellon Scaife, John M. Olin, the Koch brothers, Sheldon Adelson, and others, the right has been “working the refs” since the early 1970s. Massive investments in media organizations, advocacy groups, think tanks, so-called “social welfare” institutions, and the like have all served to push our political discourse into ideologically friendly territory.

Central to this strategy has been a relentless attack on the press. “It’s no secret that the media is, by and large, liberal,” Ted Cruz’s campaign spokesperson recently told Politico. This accusation has achieved the status of cliché by now, despite oceans of counterevidence presented here and elsewhere. According to the story line, the most extreme examples of liberal media bias can be found at PBS and NPR, both of which have been the targets of never-ending defunding campaigns since the 1980s. “PBS Epitomizes Liberal Elite,” screamed a 2012 *US News & World Report* headline above an attack article by then-Heritage Foundation vice president Mike Gonzalez. Upon coming across this and so many similar stories, a genuine liberal can only sigh and say, “If only...”

Take a look at how right-wing memes dominated the February 11 debate that PBS moderated between Sanders and Hillary Clinton. Judy Wood-

ruff began the evening by informing Sanders that voters were asking, “How big a role do you foresee for the federal government? It’s already spending 21 percent of the entire US economy. How much larger would government be in the lives of Americans under a Sanders presidency?” She presented no evidence to support her contention that a significant number of Democratic primary voters, or even potential general-election voters, actually care about this. And it’s hard to believe that many do. The “size” of government may excite Tea Party activists and conservative pundits, but in the real world, people concern themselves with what the government does and doesn’t do for them. (Just ask President Rand Paul.) Woodruff might have asked Sanders to justify his plans on the basis of their efficiency. For instance: Would single-payer healthcare really save people more money in healthcare payments than it would cost in higher taxes? Sanders tried to answer her this way, providing the

substance Woodruff’s question lacked. But she simply doubled down, demanding, “My question is: How big would government be? Would there be any limit on the size of the role of government?”

PBS’s other moderator, Gwen Ifill, continued in the same silly vein. Her first question, to Hillary, complained that she too has “proposed fairly expansive ideas about government.” She recalled Bill Clinton’s announcement that “the era of big government is over” as if it had been Hillary, not Bill, who’d said it. Ifill went on: “When asked your feelings about the federal government this week, 61 percent of New Hampshire

Democrats told exit pollsters that they are angry or at least dissatisfied. Given what you and Senator Sanders are proposing—an expanding government in almost every area of our lives—is it fair for Americans who fear government to fear you?” Note the rhetorical, right-wing sleight-of-hand here: How does the percentage of New Hampshire



Armed with hundreds of millions of dollars from wealthy funders, the right has been “working the refs” since the early 1970s.

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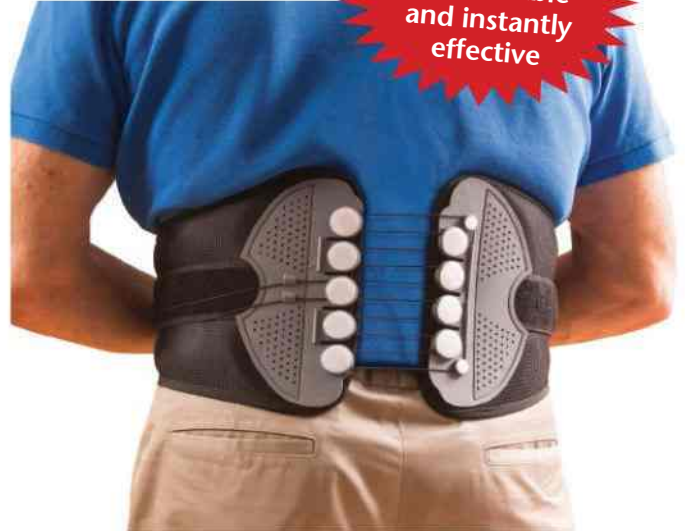
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"When it comes to dealing with Russia," debate moderator Judy Woodruff demanded of Sanders, "how hard are you prepared to be?"

Democrats who are "angry or at least dissatisfied" with the government translate into a complaint about the *size* of government, much less an undefined "fear" of Hillary? Is it not at least equally possible that Americans are "angry" or "dissatisfied" at Congress's refusal to address a tax code that benefits the superwealthy or to rein in the predatory practices of the big banks?

Over and over, the so-called liberals at PBS paid tribute to right-wing talking points. Asking about the issue of money in politics, Woodruff put Clinton on the defensive over the fact that she has received about \$10 million "from just two wealthy financiers." Might it have been worth mentioning here, to give viewers some context, that the vast majority of the 358 families who have donated more than \$100,000 to a candidate are supporting Republicans? What of Adelson's \$150 million, or the \$889 million the Koch brothers plan to raise and spend? Not a nickel of that

money is going to Hillary or any other Democrat.

Foreign-policy questions were similarly skewed. Not a single one, for instance, addressed the threat of climate change. Instead, sounding like a Reagan-era Republican, Woodruff demanded of Sanders: "When it comes to dealing with Russia...how hard are you prepared to be? Are you prepared to institute further economic sanctions? Would you be prepared to move militarily if Russia moves on Eastern Europe?"

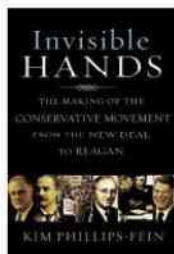
A few years ago, PBS created a right-wing media-pundit talk show hosted by Paul Gigot of *The Wall Street Journal*. When it failed to attract an audience, the network simply gave it to Fox. Could it be that Woodruff and Ifill had a similar model in mind? If not, perhaps next time they could turn the moderating duty over to Big Bird and Cookie Monster. It would be at least as informative, and a lot more entertaining. ■



 **FIVE BOOKS/TIMOTHY SHENK**

The Dawn of Trump's America

Timothy Shenk has written for *The Nation* about capitalism past and present, most recently on the power of the Federal Reserve. He has long been fascinated by capitalism's greatest admirers. "For anyone who came of age in the 1990s, the significance of the conservative movement was a given," he says. Here, he offers five books for grasping the GOP's current internal strife, and the rise of Donald Trump.



Invisible Hands:
The Making of the
Conservative Move-
ment From the New
Deal to Reagan
by Kim Phillips-Fein

W.W. Norton
& Company, 2009

Conservatives trace their intellectual history to the reaction against the French Revolution, if not earlier—but in the United States, the movement assumed its modern form in the revolt against Franklin Roosevelt. Focusing on a decades-long campaign by a faction of the business elite to roll back the New Deal, Kim Phillips-Fein provides a tour of the right's 20th-century journey from the fringes of American politics to its very center.



**The Conservative
Intellectual Movement
in America Since 1945**
by George H. Nash
Basic Books, 1976

Complaints about the marginalization of conservatives on the nation's campuses have been a staple of right-wing punditry since William F. Buckley Jr. inveighed against godless Yalies, but the lament indicates how seriously the right takes the battle for ideas. Although more sophisticated analyses of conservative thinkers have appeared since Nash's book was published in 1976, none better capture the sweep of the movement or its conviction that the world's fate might hinge on the next issue of *National Review*.



Before the Storm:
Barry Goldwater and
the Unmaking of the
American Consensus
by Rick Perlstein

Hill & Wang, 2001

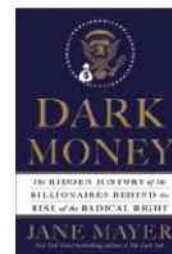
Today, Rick Perlstein is one of the country's premier political journalists; this is the book that earned him that distinction. Written with a novelist's eye for detail, a historian's sensitivity to the past, and a party strategist's understanding of the art of political warfare, *Before the Storm* brings to life the movement that won Barry Goldwater the GOP presidential nomination. Goldwater lost that election, but even in defeat he exposed the outlines of an electoral realignment that transformed the Republican Party—and, eventually, the nation.



**To Serve God and
Wal-Mart:**
The Making of Chris-
tian Free Enterprise
by Bethany Moreton

Harvard
University Press, 2010

In the United States, no political movement can survive for long unless it finds popular support. Bethany Moreton's history of Wal-Mart explores the union of evangelical Christianity and business-friendly economics that has made conservatism such a formidable electoral force. Arguing against those who depict working-class Republicans as dupes of a plutocratic ruling elite, Moreton examines the needs—cultural, political, and economic—that have created these strange bedfellows.



Dark Money:
The Hidden His-
tory of the Billionaires
Behind the Rise of
the Radical Right
by Jane Mayer

Doubleday, 2016

A triumph of investigative journalism, Jane Mayer's study of the financial backers who sustain the American right demonstrates the enormous influence wielded by a radicalized donor class. Inspired by thinkers like Friedrich Hayek and visions of political change fired by Barry Goldwater, a handful of wealthy magnates have replaced the traditional Republican establishment. With rival billionaire Donald Trump threatening to turn the system they built to his own purposes, it's little wonder these funders are now complaining about the returns on their investment.

“THERE COULD BE NO MORE
IMPORTANT OR TIMELY BOOK.”

—Doris Kearns Goodwin

“TIMELY
AND
INSPIRED.”

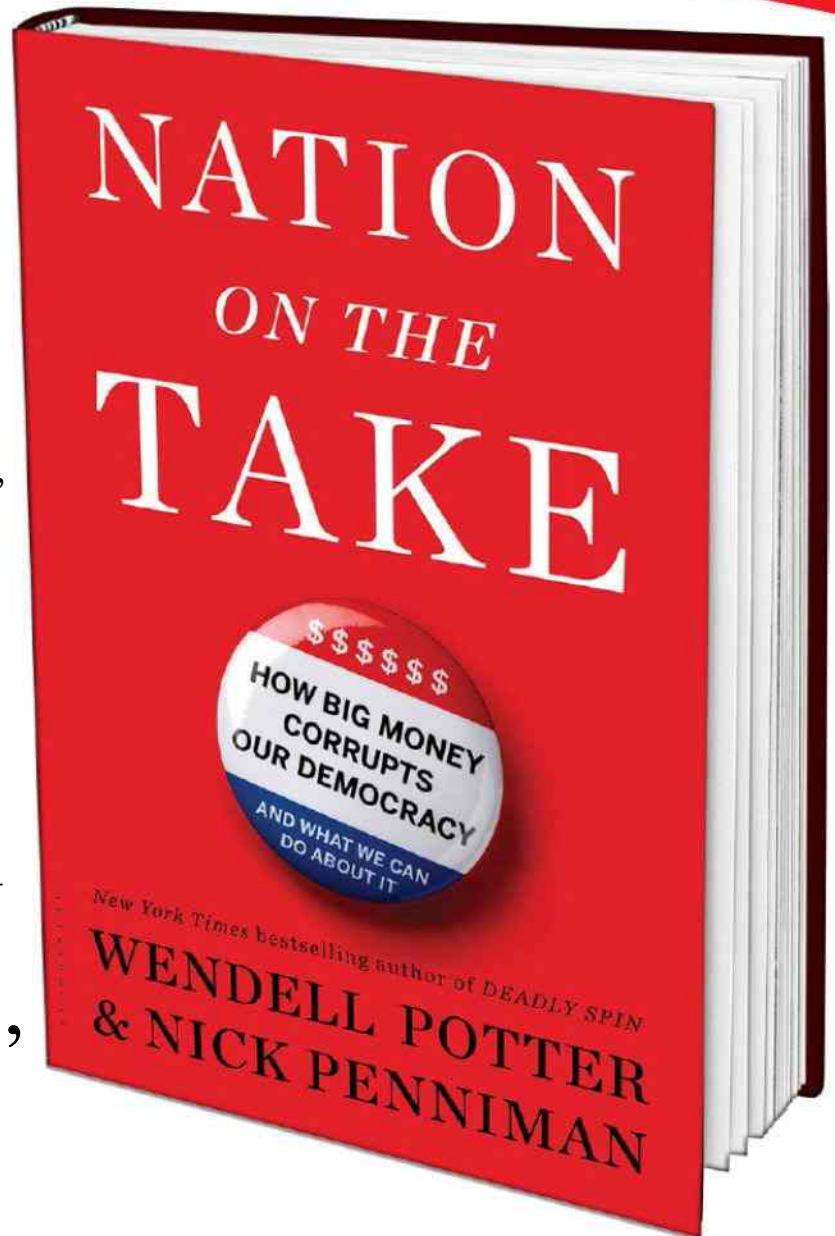
—Arianna Huffington

“POWERFUL.”

— Senator Alan Simpson,
R-WY

“HOW EACH
OF US PAYS A
PRICE...FOR
THE RUNAWAY
POLITICAL
MONEY GAME.”

— Hedrick Smith,
author of *Who Stole the
American Dream?*



*How we can save America from the corruption
that is destroying our democracy.*

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THE OSCARS

Short Stories

At right, Patricia Williams describes a harrowing nominee for best documentary short: *Last Day of Freedom*, about a mentally ill Vietnam veteran sentenced to death. The other nominees are:

BODY TEAM 12

Garmai Sumo is the only woman on the film's eponymous team, which collects the corpses of Ebola victims in Liberia.

**CHAU, BEYOND THE LINES**

Chau, a Vietnamese teen living in a care center for children born with birth defects caused by Agent Orange, dreams of becoming an artist and designer.

CLAUDE LANZMANN: SPECTRES OF THE SHOAH

Lanzmann discusses the personal and professional difficulties he encountered three decades ago making *Shoah*, a film that took 12 years to complete.

**A GIRL IN THE RIVER: THE PRICE OF FORGIVENESS**

Saba, an 18-year-old Pakistani, tells the story of how she fell in love, eloped, and narrowly survived an attempted honor killing.

Patricia J. Williams



Native Landscapes

The haunting Last Day of Freedom considers a veteran on death row.

Midway through February, poised between an unusually controversial Super Bowl and an unusually controversial Academy Awards ceremony, I sit listening to the presidential primary debates in South Carolina. Twitter has been a jangled mess: Donald and Beyoncé, Peyton and Hillary, JLaw and Cam. It's as though you could take a sentence uttered by any of them at some point in their life, jumble it in a Vitaminix, place a spoonful into the mouth of the next, and it would make as much sense: "Anyone who thinks my story is anywhere near over is sadly mistaken." "I get nervous when I don't get nervous." "Pressure is something you feel when you don't know what the hell you're doing." "I have a million ideas. The country can't afford them all." "You have to live like a winner. You have to think like a winner. You have to eat like a winner."

Somewhere behind the theatricalities of halftime in America lies the broad playing field of real life and its landscape of worsening resource inequalities, unattended infrastructure, and simmering racial resentments. Is there nothing that can connect our national cinematic appetites with the urgent need for serious political address?

Enter a small jewel of a film titled *Last Day of Freedom*. Available on Netflix, it has been nominated for an Oscar in the poorly publicized category of Best Documentary Short Subject. Lest it slip under your radar, let me urge its merits. (Let me also reveal that although I served as a consultant for the multiplatform series of which this film is part, I had nothing to do with its making.)

An exquisitely rendered 32-minute animation, *Last Day of Freedom* presents the life of Manny Babbitt, a homeless, mentally challenged, traumatized Vietnam vet who, in a PTSD panic induced by oncoming headlights, ran off the street and into the home of Leah Schendel, an elderly woman, whom he struck repeatedly. She died of a heart attack at the scene. The film is narrated by Manny's brother Bill, who turned him in to the police—"I had to be responsible"—hoping against hope that he might be hospitalized and get treatment. Instead, Manny was defended by a drunken lawyer who called no witnesses and excluded "niggers" from the jury. Manny was

executed in 1999, one day after his 50th birthday.

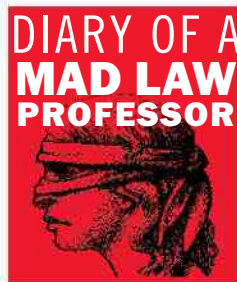
The story is a sad but familiar one from a statistical perspective: Manny was swallowed by a vortex of legal, political, and social failures. He was injured in a car accident when he was 12 and suffered traumatic brain injury that severely impaired his intellectual abilities. He joined the Marines despite failing the eligibility test—and became one of the hundreds of thousands of men who were inducted during the 1960s despite not meeting the military's basic mental or physical requirements. Nicknamed Robert McNamara's "Moron Corps," these people were conscripted as part of President Johnson's

backdoor attempt to field sufficient numbers of soldiers on the ground in Vietnam. Manny served several tours of duty in Khe Sanh, enduring some of the bloodiest battles of the war. By the time he returned to the States, with shrapnel embedded in his skull, he was "chasing shadows"—paranoid, homeless, and unable to hold a job. His brother Bill took him in, but in those days the symptoms of PTSD

were not widely recognized or discussed. Manny went untreated.

The poet Shaul Tchernichovsky once wrote, "A person is only the outline of his native landscape." Manny Babbitt was an outline etched on a moral landscape oblivious to the consequences of concussion, ignorant about mental illness, unresponsive to the needs of its combat veterans, and gung-ho about the death penalty. Still, what makes the telling of this particular life truly exceptional is its literal as well as figurative perspective. Because the story is recounted by the condemned man's brother, it foregrounds the generally invisible grief suffered by the families of those on death row. "He said he was a monster," Bill mourns. "I see a little brother." He describes the death chamber with quiet, heartbroken exhaustion: "The press was at Manny's head. I was standing at his feet.... I see my brother lying there in his white socks.... My family back home was in agony."

The story is a sad but familiar one: Manny Babbitt was swallowed by a vortex of legal, political, and social failures.



At the same time, the film is quite careful not to disrespect the family of Leah Schendel, whose members were also present at Manny's execution. Bill, who used to believe in the death penalty before "it came knocking on my door," observes them with choked sadness: "They were victims. They had a terrible loss. But we're all partners in this experiment. We've all got blood on our hands now."

In addition to its compelling narrative, *Last Day of Freedom's* visual artistry is stunning. Coproduced and codirected by Nomi Talisman and Dee Hibbert-Jones, it is all the more remarkable for being the first film both women have made on their own. The animation's more than 30,000 stills were all drawn by hand. The lines are fluid, spare, unflinchingly intimate. This rendering is somehow infinitely more affecting than if it had been done as a straightforward, on-camera-style interview.

Photography sometimes invites us to forget that we are

looking at a re-presentation, a reframing, a reinterpretation. *Last Day of Freedom* uses the simplicity of its form to very different effect. Drawn almost entirely in black ink on white backgrounds, it deploys subtle visual cues: a few foggy smudges, a bit of play with the font and thickness of lines, the rare dollop of red. This works to filter out distraction; the economy of line focuses attention, like haiku. It's as though we were inside Bill's head, quietly reliving a nightmare, the rise and fall of his voice summoning only so much of the dream as he can bear. This restraint makes his story not merely personal, but politically haunting; not just tragic, but evocative of universal human complexities.

Watching this film will remind you of all that remains unsaid—on all sides—in our current political food fight. Hopefully, it will also push us to insist upon debate that addresses the actual consequences of governance bewildered and thus held unaccountable for its flaws. ■



My sources tell me Pope's real name is Jorge, not Francis. Born in Argentina, not Rome. Ted Cruz of popes! #MakeTheVaticanGreatAgain

@anastasia-keeleey, *Nation* engagement editor
Annie Shields, parodying Donald Trump's feud with Pope Francis

SNAPSHOT/HADI MIZBAN

Gilded Rage

An Iraqi mime prepares for a show in Diwaniyah, Iraq. His street performance was part of a protest against the political and economic situation in the country, where Iraqis continue to live with a war-damaged infrastructure, a lack of clean water, and the dangerous instability that the US occupation left in its wake.



AP

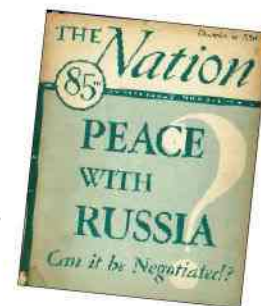
BACK ISSUES/1950

National Security and the Status Quo

Writing in this issue about Bernie Sanders's foreign-policy record, Robert English cites the work of scholar Hans Morgenthau, who formulated the "Six Principles of Political Realism" as a guide to international affairs.

In an essay for *The Nation's* 85th-anniversary issue, published in December 1950—six months into the Korean War—Morgenthau decried the escalating conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union, which he termed "a historical event of unprecedented magnitude," and cautioned against its impacts, both at home and abroad.

"In embarking upon a holy crusade to extirpate the evil of bolshevism powerful groups attempt to outlaw morally and legally all popular movements favoring social reform and thus to make the status



quo impregnable to change," Morgenthau observed. "The non-existent threat of Communist revolution becomes, as it was for German and Italian fascism, a convenient device for rallying a confused and patriotic citizenry to the defense of what seems to be the security of the United States but is actually the maintenance of the status quo. That such a movement, if it were ever able to determine the domestic and international policies of the United States, would jeopardize both the nation's security and the domestic status quo only adds tragic irony to the confusion of thought and action."

—Richard Kreitner

JEB BUSH'S CAMPAIGN AS SPORTS METAPHOR

You came to play tennis,
And thus came up short.
Professional wrestling
Was never your sport.

Calvin Trillin
Deadline Poet

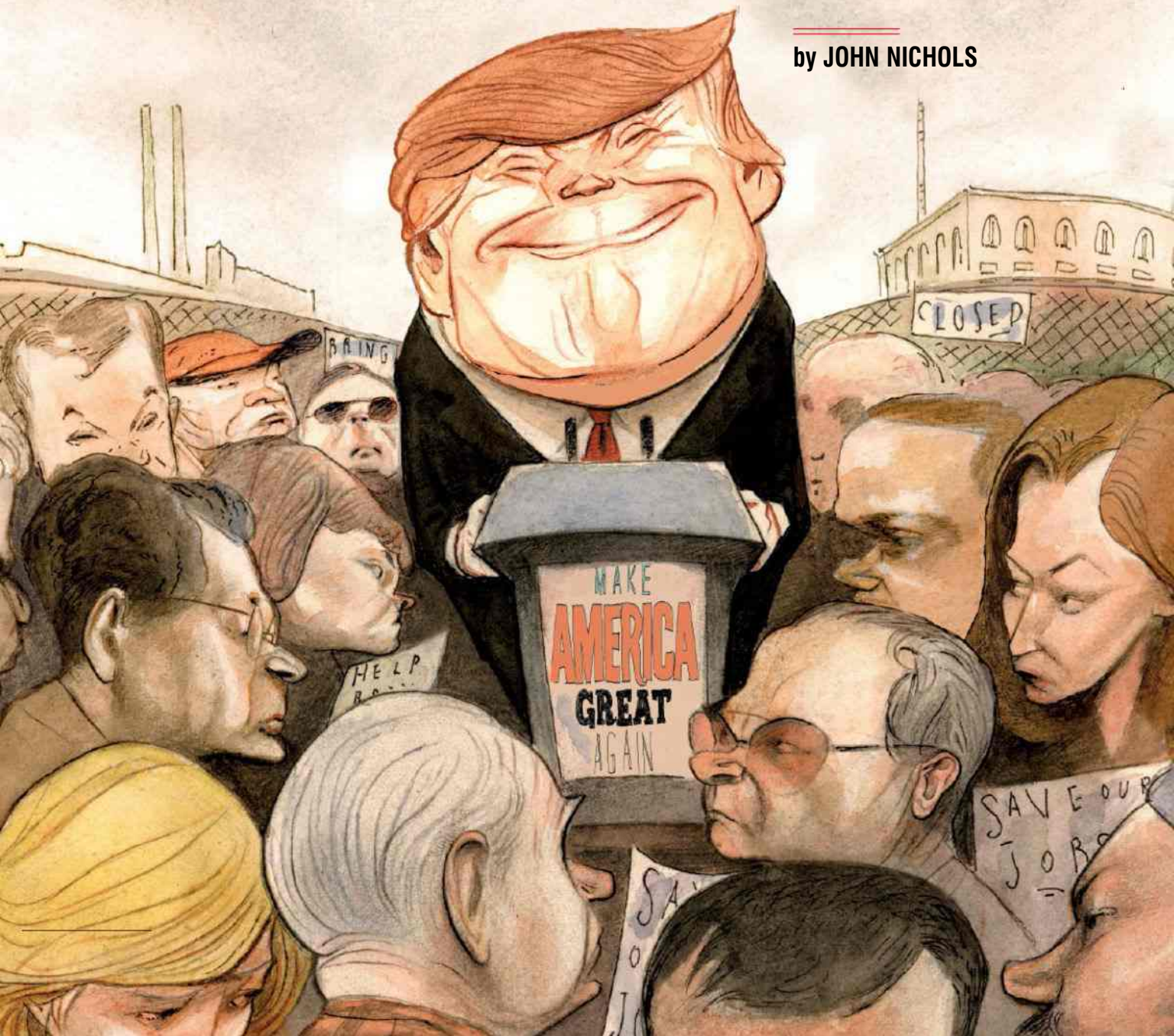
IN THE MIDDLE OF THE POLITICAL FOOD fight that was the ninth Republican presidential debate, the front-runner suddenly abandoned the petty politics of the moment and delivered a message that mattered less to the scramble for South Carolina primary votes and more to the November fight for the battleground states that ring the Great Lakes.

"This country is dying. And our workers are losing their jobs," Donald Trump declared. Noting the announcement of plans by the air-conditioner company Carrier to transfer production (and 1,400 union jobs) from Indianapolis to Mexico, the billionaire said, "Carrier is moving. And if you saw the [workers].... They were crying." Promising a no-more-tears presidency, Trump said he'd renegotiate

DONALD TRUMP IS DANGEROUS

Without a forceful response from Democrats, his populism could win over blue-collar workers.

by JOHN NICHOLS



“trade pacts that are no good for us and no good for our workers” and tell corporations to keep production in the United States or “we’re going to tax you.”

The pundits and political insiders who have missed every other warning sign from the 2016 race missed that one as well. But Trump’s recognition of shuttered plants and crying workers struck Ohio Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur. “I heard him. I heard exactly what he was saying, and so did the people of Indianapolis and Indiana,” Kaptur said. “So did everyone else who has lost a job to offshoring and outsourcing, or who knows they are just one more trade deal away from losing a job.”

Kaptur, a Democrat who represents a multiethnic, multiracial district stretching from Toledo to Cleveland, has decried Trump’s divisive remarks as shameful deviations from the American promise of “unity, not hatred.” But she cautions Democrats against assuming that the revulsion to Trump’s hateful language and crude politics will immediately disqualify him in the eyes of scared and angry voters in states that have been essential building blocks for Democratic wins in presidential races of recent decades. Kaptur’s not alone in this view.

Service Employees International Union president Mary Kay Henry warns that Trump could win a good many union votes—and perhaps the presidency—if he secures the Republican nod. “I think this is a very dangerous political moment in our country,” said the head of the SEIU, which has endorsed Hillary Clinton for the Democratic nomination, during a January discussion of Trump’s appeal. “I think he’s touching this vein of terrible anxiety that working-class people feel about their current status, but more importantly, how terrified they are for their kids not being able to do as well as they have, never mind doing better.” Henry noted that internal polls of union members across the country reveal a “broken sense of the future” and raise the prospect of an emotion-driven election in which it is “easier [to] appeal to fear than to what’s possible.”

“I don’t think the Democrats are ready for this,” adds Ralph Nader, the consumer activist and former presidential candidate. “Once he gets these wildcats off his back, once he gets the Republican nomination, then Trump becomes the builder again. He’s already said he’s going to be the greatest jobs president in history. He hasn’t pushed that line too hard in the primaries because he doesn’t want to come off as something other than a conservative. But if he’s the nominee, watch out.”

“Watch out”? Really? Isn’t Trump supposed to be unelectable? Isn’t he too bigoted, too crude, to be taken seriously? That’s what Republicans told themselves for most of 2015. But since his big wins in the New Hampshire and South Carolina primaries, the GOP establishment has begun to adjust to the prospect of a billionaire nominee with a flair for grabbing media attention, shaping the debate, and shredding opponents.

Yes—watch out. “This is an unprecedented election in so many ways that we don’t know what electability is,” cautions Ilyse Hogue, president of NARAL Pro-Choice America, which has backed Clinton. “What we do know is that Trump is better positioned to pivot, to Etch-A-Sketch his message, than the other Republicans. That constitutes a threat.”

Trump has already proved to be competitive with Clinton and her insurgent challenger, Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders, in the polls from battleground states like Florida, North Carolina, and Colorado. Measures of hypothetical matchups should always be considered with skepticism when the parties are in the midst of nomination fights—and when potential independent candida-

cies are being explored. But poll numbers and interviews with Democrats in key states like Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin indicate that the 2016 Democratic nominee could face a fight for industrial states that provided vital support for Barack Obama in 2008 and 2012. And Trump has yet to make his play for those states.

Right now, Trump is still peddling the snake-oil blend of xenophobia and bigotry that plays well in Republican primaries (one recent survey in South Carolina found that 38 percent of his backers believe the Confederacy should have won the Civil War). If he’s the Republican nominee, however, he’ll be confident about South Carolina. And Trump is all but certain to have what Hogue refers to as his “Etch-A-Sketch” moment, pivoting toward economic-populist themes that, while still crudely nationalistic, might attract independents and Democrats in key states. Republican pollster Frank Luntz says that in the focus groups he’s conducted, he has regularly found people who voted for Obama twice but now say “they would consider Trump.” Why? Because Trump is speaking to the fears of Americans who have lost faith not just in establishment politics, but in establishment economics. And he is likely to do a lot more of that.

It’s in the industrialized swing states where Trump’s promise to protect jobs and change trade policies could resonate among blue-collar workers. AFL-CIO president Richard Trumka acknowledges that workers are “talking to me about Donald Trump.” Union leaders fret about internal surveys that show the billionaire is attracting greater support than is usually afforded Republicans. While much of it comes from white male voters, these union leaders say they’ve seen some evidence of a broader openness to Trump’s message. Luntz claims that his candidacy “would get the highest percentage of black votes since Ronald Reagan in 1980.” That’s not a high bar—exit polls gave Reagan 14 percent—but the prospect of losing any working-class votes in states like Wisconsin, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, and Pennsylvania should be a wake-up call for Democrats.

“The two major parties will have to change, or they are likely to be changed by voters who have had enough,” argues the Rev. Jesse Jackson. But what if one party changes—however cynically or crudely—to address the fears of the moment, while the other does not? What if Trump turns up the volume on a populist message while the Democrats run a more cautious campaign?

Sanders supporters point to polls in some battleground states that show him faring better than Clinton in matchups with Trump. “Bernie’s where the Democrats need to be,” says RoseAnn DeMoro, executive director of the National Nurses United union, regarding Sanders, a longtime critic of corporate-friendly trade pacts. “He’s speaking to fears that working families have about the future, but he’s not dividing people the way Trump is.”

Kaptur, who has not endorsed a candidate in the Democratic race, made a similar point on a drive from Toledo to Lorain, where the steel mills are cutting production and in some cases shutting down. “These people have been hit over and over and over again. They’ve retrained. They’ve done everything they can to survive—but the plants keep closing. They’ve been battered, and

“Trump is touching this vein of terrible anxiety that working-class people feel about their current status.”

—Mary Kay Henry, SEIU president

they're sick of it. They want security, and this country is not delivering security. When Bernie talks about this, I think it touches people. Clinton says a lot of the same things, but I don't hear the same passion."

That's a fair critique. But the counter to Trump's appeal can't merely be to debate on his terms. "It won't work to go, 'My populism is bigger than your populism,'" Hogue says. A smart challenge must involve a full-spectrum response to the billionaire's appeal as "a builder and a doer," Nader says. "He reaches millions of people by making them comfortable with their prejudices. The press sometimes goes after him on that, which is good. But the press never gets to his vulnerabilities—his tax returns. There's so much there, but Trump has diverted attention from a real examination of his financial dealings. Progressives can't get distracted the way conservatives have. They have to expose him."

Exposing the billionaire as a crony capitalist means pursuing the question of whether a candidate who opposes a minimum-wage hike would really take on multinational corporations in order to save jobs in Flint and Youngstown. In addition to challenging Trump himself, savvy observers say, it is vital to challenge Trumpism—the politics of division that scapegoats, stereotypes, and appeals to bigotry. Trumka says that "a campaign fueled by contempt and exclusion is bad for working families," and labor unions are preparing to make that point with an aggressive campaign similar to their 2008 push to get union members behind Obama's candidacy.

The challenge to Trump must address economic anxiety while also emphasizing pluralism, says Hogue. "Where Trump's weakness is, and where his opponent will have an advantage, is that the way this country genuinely experiences economic inequality has everything to do with your race, your gender, your treatment as an immigrant—all these issues." Clinton has begun speaking to this. Even if Wall Street is reined in and economic challenges are addressed, she warned in the Democratic debate in Milwaukee, "we would still have racism holding people back. We would still have sexism preventing women from getting equal pay. We would still have LGBT people who get married on Saturday and get fired on Monday." That's smart—as was Sanders's call in the same debate for "a political revolution in which millions of Americans stand up, come together, [and] not let the Trumps of the world divide us."

Clinton and Sanders are both evolving—and improving—as candidates. This is important, because if Trump is the GOP nominee, he will not be beaten with old talking points or a cautiously calculated message. "The Democrats have to get much better at making the connections between the water crisis in Flint and the closing of factories in Flint," Kaptur says. "They have to make all the connections between trade and poverty, between deindustrialization and hollowed-out cities. People are hurting for a lot of reasons. Democrats have to recognize that hurt, and they have to explain that a politics of division is never going to address it."

"Dividing people doesn't make positive change possible," Kaptur adds. "Dividing people makes the change that are necessary impossible." ■

HIV MYSTERY: SOLVED?

Researchers are scrambling to discover how a radical new tool can crack the US epidemic's most stubborn problem: racial disparity.

by TIM MURPHY

ANYONE WHO WAS FOLLOWING THE HIV EPIDEMIC IN 2001 FOUND the news shocking: The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported that, in a massive study of young gay men in the United States, a whopping 32 percent of those who were black had HIV. This rate was on a par with those in sub-Saharan Africa, and more than four times higher than the rate among gay men overall. Most researchers were dumbfounded: Why, after some 15 years of widespread campaigns in gay communities urging condom use, was the HIV rate among black men so staggeringly high—and still rising?

Public health has been trying to answer these questions ever since. Even as the epidemic has slowed dramatically in other populations, new infections among black gay men spiked 22 percent between 2005 and 2014. Among black men under 24 years old, infections shot up 87 percent. Why?

That question has lots of complicated answers. But today, many researchers have shifted their attention to a major scientific breakthrough that, they hope, will simplify things considerably. In 2012, a groundbreaking study estimated that sexually active gay men who took a daily (or very close to daily) dose of Truvada, a medication initially developed to treat HIV infection, reduced their chances of getting the virus by 99 percent. The FDA approved Truvada's use for preventive purposes—what's called pre-exposure prophylaxis, or PrEP. More recent research has put PrEP's effectiveness for people who take it faithfully at 100 percent. Finally, after more than 30 years of the epidemic, there is a prevention tool other than condoms.

But the effort to turn PrEP's promise into a reality is providing insight that is valuable beyond HIV. The long, failing attempt to crack the riddle of black gay men's higher HIV rate is a cautionary tale for any public-health system operating in a world with endemic inequity.

Tim Murphy has covered HIV/AIDS and LGBT issues for years for The New York Times, New York magazine, Poz, Out, The Advocate, and other outlets.

IF EVER ANYONE WAS GOING TO GROW UP TO BE AN HIV-prevention researcher, it was Greg Millett, who was at the CDC when the 2001 study broke. Coming of age in 1980s Brooklyn, the son of a Panamanian microbiologist at St. Vincent's in Greenwich Village—the hospital that became the epicenter of the AIDS epidemic in New York—Millett knew he was gay



from an early age. At conservative Dartmouth College in New Hampshire, his coming-out (in the school paper, no less) prompted what he calls “a bit of a ruckus. Lots of people came up to me and said, ‘There’s no way you’re gay; you’re masculine and great at sports.’” He remembers being the only openly gay black person on campus, at a time when there were not more than 10 openly gay students at Dartmouth of any kind.

When he graduated and returned to New York in 1990, the AIDS epidemic was already raging. By the time he was 21, Millett had seen 18 of his friends die within the course of a single year. Aiming to overcome his personal fear of the disease, he volunteered at Gay Men’s Health Crisis, running HIV-prevention workshops for black and Latino men. But he wanted to delve deeper into the science, so he entered the prestigious public-health school at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. “It was like the skies fell open for me,” Millett recalls. “I fell in love with being able to design studies and interpret statistics.” When he graduated, the CDC invited him to Atlanta to work on

**Finally,
after more
than 30
years of the
epidemic,
there is a
prevention
tool other
than
condoms.**

HIV prevention for young gay men. With no truly effective treatment for the disease discovered until 1996, it was the heyday of so-called behavioral interventions—programs that brought gay men together to talk about how to make safer sexual choices and reduce their risk.

Throughout the 1990s, little research was done into racial disparities in the HIV rates for gay males; the prevailing assumption was that all sexually active gay men were equally at risk. But then, in 2001, came the shocking new data about black men. Millett still recalls that revelation vividly. “At CDC, there was a lot of incredulity that the rates could be that high,” he says. The culture at large sought to understand the statistics in moralistic, finger-pointing terms: Gay black men were engaging in uniquely dangerous behaviors, the public thinking went; hence their higher HIV rates.

The vague notions of black gay men as uniquely reckless crystallized around the idea of the “down-low”—essentially, the notion that nominally heterosexual black men were secretly having sex with other men, contract-

ing HIV, and then passing it on to their unsuspecting girlfriends or wives. A *New York Times Magazine* cover story delved into the idea in 2003. The down-low hysteria peaked in 2004, when J.L. King—whose best-selling memoir professed to be a tell-all of the DL life—went on Oprah Winfrey's show to “expose” the phenomenon.

The racially charged presumption that riskier behavior—such as more sexual partners, less condom use, and more drug-fueled sex—caused higher HIV rates among gay black men deeply troubled Millett; so did the fact that the CDC continued to put its money into programs to change that behavior. “There were no behavioral interventions that had ever reduced HIV rates except needle-exchange programs,” he says. “So why were we doing them? It was very uncomfortable to bring up [this fact] at CDC, because those programs were meant to show Congress that we were doing something.”

Millett began researching the down-low theory himself. By the time of Winfrey's broadcast, he had already debunked some of its core assumptions. His data showed that bisexual and non-gay-identified black men used condoms *more* than those who embraced the gay label. “I was invited on the show to refute King, but CDC leadership told me they declined the invite,” Millett recalls. It was in the middle years of George W. Bush's administration, and conservative Christian leadership was ascendant in Washington. The CDC, Millett adds, did not want to promote the idea that it was going to bat for black men who slept with men.

Still, Millett and his colleagues—including John Peterson, Rich Wolitski, Ron Valdiserri, and Ron Stall—were determined to delve into the risky-behavior idea. They combed through countless studies going back nearly two decades and collated the results. Voilà—a pattern emerged. In their landmark 2006 paper, they showed that, historically, gay black men had in fact reported engaging in *less* risky behavior than their nonblack counterparts. They also found that gay black men had much higher rates of incarceration, with its attendant same-sex activity. And because of factors like poverty and unemployment, they had less access to healthcare—a deficit that, according to Millett, “launched a whole cascade of risk factors,” such as being less likely to be tested for HIV; or treated if they were found to be HIV-positive (which dramatically reduces the chance of passing it on); or treated for other sexually transmitted diseases that make one more susceptible to HIV; or given overall information about staying HIV-free. The study finally disrupted the public-health consensus that behavior alone was the problem.

But what really solved the riddle was an emerging body of research finding that gay black men in urban centers—far more than gay men of other races—tended to choose sexual partners from within very tight, dense networks, and often chose significantly older men. (This was also true of black women, among whom the infection rate had been similarly resistant to prevention efforts.) That closed circle of sexual partners created a horrific feedback loop.

“The background prevalence of HIV was already so high,” says Kenyon Farrow, a gay black man and the director of US and global health policy for the Treatment Action Group. “HIV rates had been allowed to climb with no real effective interventions in place for so long that [getting HIV] became a law of averages. I'd always say to people, ‘If I go to a gay-black-male hangout in New York City, the likelihood I'll end up sleeping with someone HIV-positive is one in three—and they probably don't have healthcare.’”



The results suggest strongly that providing PrEP in a vacuum isn't enough.



A dose of reality: Kenyon Farrow stresses access to healthcare broadly.

This research, paired with Millett's, marked a seismic shift in the public-health world's understanding of the epidemic. “It was a collective ‘aha!’” Millett says. “You'd hear sighs and wows at conferences, because these factors hadn't been discussed before.”

In the decade since Millett's breakthrough, the governmental approach to reversing the HIV rate among gay black men has shifted dramatically. The Obama administration prioritized funding for an effort that had begun inside the CDC: shifting the focus from behavioral programs to HIV testing and then, for those who test positive, getting them into regular medical care. In 2011, studies confirmed that effective HIV treatment could virtually eradicate someone's risk of passing on the virus.

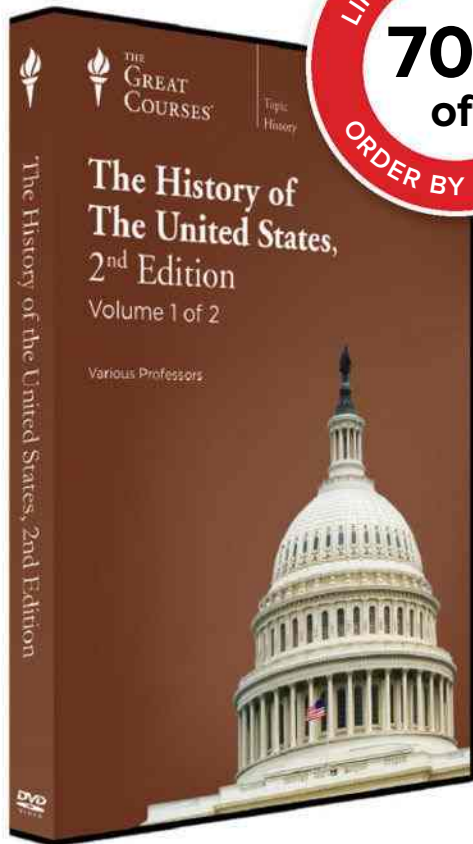
Still, new infection rates weren't coming down. Millett, who worked on this issue within the Obama White House, felt like he'd hit a wall. In 2014, he cowrote a study finding that even if nearly all HIV-positive gay black men in Atlanta were diagnosed and entered treatment, it wouldn't be enough to significantly close the gap in HIV rates between them and white gay men. “We've waited so long, and we have so many men who are HIV-positive, that testing and treating alone isn't enough,” he says. “These disparities would persist for decades to come.”

Then came PrEP.

DESPITE THE CONTROVERSY THAT THE THERAPY stirred—critics worried that it would encourage gay men to throw caution (read: condoms) to the wind and suffer a spike in other STDs—some places that have already been wildly successful in lowering infection rates, like San Francisco and Massachusetts, have added promoting PrEP to their arsenal. “I have a strong feeling that they will be successful at ending the epidemic as we know it,” said Anthony Fauci, the director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, speaking to *The New York Times*. Others echoed his statement. “I'm convinced PrEP has to be part of the equation at this point, unless black gay men are going to start using condoms 100 percent of the time, which isn't feasible,” says Ron Simmons, the longtime head of the AIDS agency Us Helping Us, which focuses on the black community in Washington, DC. “The only way to break this cycle is to have PrEP for a couple of generations.”

But San Francisco and Massachusetts have relatively small black populations compared with places like DC. And so far, it seems, gay black men have been slow to get on the PrEP train. A recent large California study—which confirmed the effectiveness of PrEP in an everyday, real-world setting—found that PrEP's adoption was low among gay black men, “especially given their risk for HIV,” said a study leader.

My Brother's Keeper, an LGBT-friendly health center in majority-black Jackson, Mississippi, started a PrEP clinic in early 2014, getting patients access to Truvada either through their existing insurance or directly from the drug's maker, Gilead, which provides it free of charge to low-income applicants without insurance. Twenty percent of the clinic's PrEP patients are white, says Dr. Leandro Mena, the medical director. Most came in asking



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for PrEP on their own initiative, having heard about it through friends or social media or hookup apps. Their average age is 45, their average income is \$50,000, and most are privately insured. Crucially, once they're prescribed Truvada, most of them take it daily.

To spread the word among Jackson's young gay black men, about a quarter of whom are already HIV-positive, the center does significant community outreach. But fewer than 10 percent of the young men with whom they connect show up, Mena says. Among those who Mena's team actually get onto PrEP, just 35 percent are still coming in for follow-up tests six months later.

One reason PrEP is a hard sell, says Mena, is that the men he's reaching can't "visualize" their risk. "I ask them what if they had a one-in-four chance of winning the lottery, and they say, 'I'd be buying lottery tickets like crazy!' Then I say, 'That's your chance of getting HIV in this city.'"

Such reasoning helps, but many barriers remain. The young men may be unemployed or homeless, so taking a daily pill to prevent HIV isn't their first priority. They may be living with parents and don't want to bring an HIV medication home. Many found the process of activating Gilead's cards to get free meds too complicated; or they didn't want to wait hours to apply for food stamps, which help prove to the company that they're eligible; or they didn't have a way to get to the pharmacy. "Many of these guys have never interacted with the healthcare system before except to go to the ER," Mena says.

A study in Chicago last summer also found via blood testing that, among 200 gay men ages 18 to 22, black participants didn't take optimal doses of Truvada to stay HIV-negative. Study leader Dr. Sybil Hosek offers an explanation: "So many other things were pressing—not having jobs, housing, food. Getting HIV was just one other thing worrying them, along with the risk of getting shot on the street."

PrEP got an unprecedented PR boost recently when it was featured prominently in a plotline on *How to Get Away With Murder*, a Shonda Rhimes-produced TV show with gay characters and a large black audience. "I want *Empire* to do it next," says Farrow, citing another show with a huge gay black following. But a large piece of the challenge is rooted in structural inequalities. At Emory University in Atlanta, Dr. Colleen Kelley and her colleagues found that levels of awareness regarding PrEP and the willingness to follow a daily regimen were actually equal among black and white gay men. "The big difference was access to healthcare," she notes. Georgia is one of 19 states—most of them red states in the South and Midwest—that have refused to expand Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act.

"I'd jump for joy if we could do that today," Kelley says, "but it'd still take some time to really see a difference in PrEP uptake. I think we need to see community-based, open-access programs offering low-cost or free PrEP and related doctor visits targeted at black gay men." Kelley says she's working on such a program in Atlanta, hopeful that the city can seed the adoption of PrEP "if you get a core group of men on it who then tell their friends they're having a good experience."

Such programs are under way in large cities like New York, San Francisco, and DC. But there is still debate about offering PrEP to uninsured people without offering comprehensive healthcare as well. "I don't want us to ignore that there's still no basic guarantee of healthcare in the former Cotton Belt and create these stand-alone PrEP outlets," Farrow says. "PrEP should be among whatever you need from a health center, not a thing where you'll only get a doctor's visit if you want PrEP."

Millett, meanwhile, insists that it can't be an either-

or proposition. "The problem is so big that anything is helpful," he says. "It takes time to get comprehensive healthcare up—and in the interim, how many more infections are there among gay black men?"

PERHAPS THE KEY TO MAKING PREP WORK FOR these men will be found in a recent study in Los Angeles, DC, and North Carolina. The study—which researchers hope to unveil at the International AIDS Conference this summer in South Africa—asked what it would take to keep at-risk gay black men HIV-negative over time. PrEP was a part of the study, but its primary focus was counseling, to help the participants address challenges in their lives beyond staying HIV-free.

"We didn't start by asking them if they wanted to take PrEP, but with a comprehensive assessment with a team of caregivers," says Darrell Wheeler, a researcher at the State University of New York at Albany who helped lead the study. So if someone needed housing, the team worked on that with the participant, or helped him organize a budget: "You could come back for an entire year and never take PrEP, and we would talk about your housing instead." Meanwhile, the study monitored lab work to look for correlations between life events and sexual health.

Impressively, nearly 90 percent of the men remained in the study over the course of the year. "I'm going to go out on a limb and say that was because the men were cared for in a way that centered on their needs," Wheeler asserts. "They would say, 'It means a lot that you took the time to understand that I was facing these issues of incarceration, to go over my résumé with me, to adjust your schedule to meet when I needed to see you.'"

The results suggest strongly that providing PrEP in a vacuum isn't enough. Previous studies have found that people with high levels of trauma, depression, anxiety, and substance use have a harder time both staying HIV-negative and adhering to their meds once they're diagnosed as HIV-positive.

Millett points to what he sees as a hopeful sign: Research shows a basic openness to PrEP among gay black men. A new CDC study of black and Latino men in Chicago, Fort Lauderdale, and Kansas City found that, presented with the option of condoms, PrEP, or condoms and PrEP, the men most at risk for HIV said they'd prefer PrEP. And he points happily to CDC data released in December showing that HIV rates among gay black men finally appear to have plateaued. When researchers looked more closely at the shocking spike in the past decade, they found that between 2010 and 2014, as public-health programs shifted to testing and treatment, infections among gay black men increased by just 1 percent.

"There's a small part of me," Millett says, "that's really angry that it's taken this long for us to recognize what the issue is, and where we need to focus to turn around the problem." He ticks off the barriers faced by gay black men: "Lower income, less education, less employment... We need to minimize these disparities. But we also don't have the luxury to wait for the end of discrimination and the emergence of socioeconomic parity. A lot of this could work even without the perfect social system." ■



“So many things were pressing—not having jobs, housing, food. Getting HIV was just one other thing.”

—Dr. Sybil Hosek

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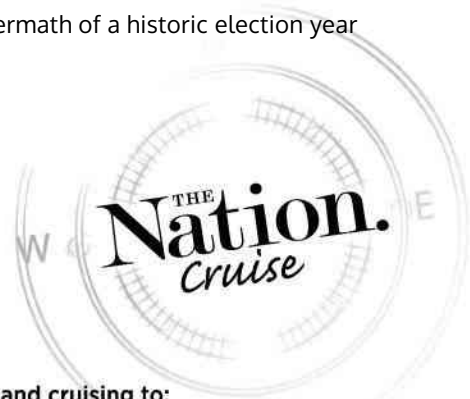
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 A photograph of Bernie Sanders from the back, wearing a dark suit, pointing his right index finger upwards. The background is dark with some light speckles, suggesting a stage or a night sky.

BERNIE SANDERS, THE FOREIGN-POLICY REALIST OF 2016

Of all the presidential candidates, he's actually the most sober and clear-eyed.

by ROBERT ENGLISH

SENATOR BERNIE SANDERS IS THE CANDIDATE for a stronger America of enhanced global influence. He is a sober, clear-eyed foreign-policy realist. Yet few recognize this, mainly because of his impassioned focus on broad domestic reforms. Most view Sanders as anything but a realist—more like a utopian idealist—and concede the foreign-policy advantage to Hillary Clinton, a former secretary of state, or to any of the tough-talking GOP candidates. But this view is wrong: The liberal Sanders is, paradoxically, the only foreign-policy realist in the presidential field.

This comes as a surprise, because realism in the popular mind has become synonymous with overweening might and the unilateral assertion of US objectives—think “shock and awe” and “regime change”—while Sanders is equated with foreign-policy idealism: allergic to the use of force, naively trusting in diplomacy. But this is not Sanders either. Moreover, such simplistic definitions have diverged very far from their original, nuanced meanings, which it behooves us to recall at this most troubled time in international affairs.

“Realism” as a foreign-policy concept is at least as old as the great-power rivalries detailed in Thucydides’ *History of the Peloponnesian War*. The term came into widespread

use with E.H. Carr’s *The Twenty Years’ Crisis*, in which he contrasted realism with the utopianism that failed to understand—much less manage—shifts in the balance of power between the two world wars. The balance of power was also a central concern of Hans Morgenthau’s *Politics Among Nations*, the classic of postwar realism.

Like all realists, Morgenthau emphasized the overriding need of states to be powerful enough to guard their own security. But Morgenthau also cautioned against squandering that power, against stumbling into costly conflicts by overestimating threats or underestimating the local backlash to our military incursions. Morgenthau’s immediate concern was Vietnam, with the United States drawn into a quagmire in part because of a false narrative foisted on the public—one that portrayed a long-running conflict in a deeply divided country as a simple matter of communist aggression. Nor did it help that our “nation building” in Vietnam depended on a client who was deeply unpopular in his own country. Substitute Iraq and WMD for Vietnam and the Gulf of Tonkin (and perhaps Ahmed Chalabi for Ngo Dinh Diem), and you know what Morgenthau would have said about the crusade to create a “new Middle East.” But who would he have judged the better realist: Sanders, who opposed the Iraq War, or Clinton, who supported it as well as promoting the “re-

Robert English is the deputy director of the School of International Relations at the University of Southern California. He specializes in the areas of Russia and the former USSR, and formerly worked for the Defense Department and the Committee for National Security.

gime change” that has failed so spectacularly in Libya?

Morgenthau also faulted the tendency of great powers to “clothe their own particular aspirations” in arrogant assumptions of moral universality. *Hubris* is what the ancient Greeks termed it. Thucydides chronicled its role in the downfall of Athens, when a reckless overseas adventure—the invasion of Sicily—turned into a military and political disaster. But the Athenians’ larger mistake lay in failing to see how their aggressive rise caused their allies to defect and neutrals to rally against them. This is a core realist concept, seen in so many conflicts throughout history: that states seek to balance against perceived threats.

That the powerful must take care not to provoke was an argument made by another famed realist, George Kennan, at the Cold War’s end. Kennan, best known as the author of our Cold War containment strategy, warned after the Soviet Union’s collapse of the danger in capitalizing on Russia’s weakness by expanding NATO and pushing the Western military alliance eastward. A prostrate Russia posed no threat, and Kennan correctly foresaw that alienating it by advancing NATO to its doorstep would produce a self-fulfilling prophecy—“a strategic blunder of potentially epic proportions.” He was joined in this opposition by numerous realist scholars, but to no avail. By now, with that prophecy fulfilled, you can guess where Sanders and Clinton each stood on the launch of NATO expansion in the 1990s.

Kennan also shared Morgenthau’s skepticism of moral crusades abroad, and understood that global influence rests as much on domestic solidarity as military power. America must live up to its own ideals and show the world “a country which knows what it wants, which is coping successfully with the problem of its internal life...and which has a spiritual vitality.” Upon these depend not only the socioeconomic wellsprings of the country’s military might, but also the moral authority to lead by example—in modern parlance, soft as well as hard power. With other candidates waving the banner of American exceptionalism, only Sanders is realist enough to sound the alarm that political corruption and deepening inequality have put the domestic foundations of that leadership in real jeopardy.

This returns us to the first and simplest of realism’s precepts: discarding illusion and self-congratulation in order to see the world as it is, to see ourselves as others see us, to face reality. This means admitting that the post-Cold War designs of both neoconservatives and liberal interventionists have done more harm than good. It means acknowledging the epic disaster of our Middle East policies—under Democratic and Republican presidents alike—and the regional chaos they have caused, as well as the myriad new threats that now radiate out toward Europe, Africa, and Asia. It also means asking how much stronger our military would be were it not for over a decade of wars, thousands of US soldiers killed, and up to a million more wounded. How much more influence might we yield today if the several trillion dollars these wars have consumed had been invested instead in infrastructure or global development?

After a frank admission of where we’ve erred in the past, the realist turns to a sober assessment of current and future threats. Alone among the candidates in putting climate change at the top of that list of threats, Sanders the “idealist” is in fact only highlighting the very realist warnings made by various Pentagon, CIA, and other defense analyses: that global warming has fueled instability and extremism in countries from Nigeria to Syria and constitutes

such an “immediate risk,” “threat multiplier,” and “grave challenge” that we ignore it at our peril. To call Sanders naive for this—for drawing attention to such underlying causes as poverty and resource scarcity, both exacerbated by climate change—instead of indulging in saber-rattling declarations to “carpet-bomb ISIS” and “shoot down Russian planes” is akin to promoting dubious remedies for the symptoms of a disease, while mocking the careful treatment of its causes to forestall a global pandemic.

As urgent as the challenges of climate change may be, the next US president will face many even more immediate crises. Does Sanders propose naive, idealistic, or radical approaches to them? Not at all. His call for a broader coalition to address the crisis in Syria—coordinating with Russia and neighboring Muslim states toward a managed transition, to avoid the even greater chaos that a sudden collapse of the Assad regime would trigger—is in fact the direction in which Washington and our European allies have recently moved. Its chances of success, certainly in the near term, are modest at best. But Sanders’s position is arguably also far more “realistic” than that of Clinton, whose support for a US-policed no-fly zone and greater involvement in Syria threatens another slippery slope leading toward a quagmire. Morgenthau lamented the inability of leaders to learn the lessons of history (including recent history) and cited a 1970 *Wall Street Journal* article discussing the fervent “desire to ‘do something’”—even when the odds are clear that it will only make things worse—thereby impeding acceptance of the fact that “the U.S. ability to shape events is often negligible.”

Other issues on which the “more experienced and pragmatic” Clinton has recently moved toward Sanders, and not vice versa, include opposition to the Keystone XL pipeline, drilling for oil in the Arctic, and the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade pact. There is similarly little daylight between the two candidates’ positions on a firm stance toward Russia, including bolstering cooperation with our European allies and the maintenance of economic sanctions until Moscow fully cooperates in a lasting resolution of the Ukraine crisis. Nor are there evident major differences in their positions on China: pushing for fairer trade relations, cautiously balancing Beijing’s military buildup in the region, and offering diplomatic support for improved human rights. It’s difficult to say if this is the most “realist” policy to address a rising China—but it’s certainly much closer than one that threatens a sudden 45 percent increase in tariffs on Chinese imports.

Launching a major trade war, tearing up the nuclear agreement with Iran, carpet bombing in Syria—the Republican candidates’ “level of dialogue on national security issues would embarrass a middle schooler,” said former defense secretary and CIA director Robert Gates last month. Donald Trump, Ted Cruz, and the rest “are out there making threats and promises that are totally unrealistic.” Once far more hawkish himself but now tempered by the experience of recent decades, Gates summarized the realist critique:

On the left, we hear about the “responsibility to protect” civilians to justify military intervention in Libya, Syria, Sudan and elsewhere. On the right,



Bernie's forebears?

Strategists in the realist tradition include, from top, George Kennan, Hans Morgenthau, and (lately) Robert Gates.

the failure to strike Syria or Iran is deemed an abdication of U.S. leadership. And so the rest of the world sees the U.S. as a militaristic country quick to launch planes, cruise missiles and drones deep into sovereign countries or ungoverned spaces.

Though Gates may differ sharply with him on domestic policy, Sanders is by Gates's own criteria probably the only foreign-policy realist left in the presidential race after the departure of Rand Paul. But many will still question Sanders's foreign-policy credentials, because realism is still reflexively associated with aggression, and because the image of a utopian idealist dies hard. The world is dangerous, and a realist must be ready to use force in defense of clear national interests; he or she cannot be a pacifist. Yet in various cases—such as the 2001 war against the Taliban and Al Qaeda in Afghanistan, or the 1999 NATO intervention to halt Slobodan Milosevic's aggression in the former Yugoslavia—Sanders hasn't shied from military action. But acting realistically means understanding when, and also *when not*, to employ armed force. As Gates continued:

Wars are a lot easier to get into than out of. Those who ask about exit strategies or question what will happen if assumptions prove wrong are rarely welcome at the conference table when the fire-breathers are demanding that we strike—as they did when advocating invading Iraq, intervening in Libya and Syria, or bombing Iran's nuclear sites. But in recent decades, presidents confronted with tough problems abroad have too often been too quick to reach for a gun. Our foreign and national security policy has become too militarized, the use of force too easy for presidents. Today, too many ideologues call for U.S. force as the first option rather than a last resort.

Gates is faulting the ideologues of America's recent Mideast policies, while Morgenthau lamented the “fire-breathers” of the Vietnam War. Now, as then, the “yen for action” (to quote the *Journal* article cited by Morgenthau) leads to “bold policy as therapy.” And once we're engaged in a conflict, the issue becomes, as Morgenthau argued, “not [one] of adapting policy to reality, but of reinterpreting reality to fit policy.” And so, for what may be the best motives but the worst judgment, the hawks stand ready to ratchet up confrontations not just in the Middle East, but also from Ukraine to the Arctic and the South China Sea.

The leading GOP contenders—Trump and Cruz—advocate highly aggressive policies that have learned nothing from the recent, much less distant, past. Clinton has admitted her “mistake” in voting for the Iraq War, but she still spins her Libya debacle as a success and supports escalating our military involvement in Syria. One of her most prized advisers is Henry Kissinger, the doyen of realpolitik, but one who broke with most realists on key policy choices—Vietnam, NATO expansion, and the invasion of Iraq. And so the search for a genuinely realist candidate leads to the unlikely of conclusions: that the wild-haired democratic socialist from Vermont is the most clear-eyed foreign-policy realist of them all. ■

SOLIDARITY

In the face of neglect by the EU and their own govern



Lesbos

by KIA
MISTILIS

*Kia Mistilis
(@kiamistilis) is a
freelance journalist
and photographer
based in Athens.*

STRATIS VALIAMOS, 40, IS A FISHERMAN from Sykamnias, a village on this Greek island that is at the epicenter of Europe's refugee crisis. Valiamos and other fishermen now routinely abandon their daily work to rescue people stranded in the Aegean, hauling rickety wooden ships crammed with hundreds of refugees off the rocks and towing them to port. They dive in the sea fully dressed to save drowning people of all ages. “Every time I go to sea, I know something's going to happen,” Valiamos says. “This has been going on for 10 years now—it's become a way of life.”

Valiamos says the Coast Guard often calls the fish-

AMID THE CATAclysm

ment's incompetence, Greeks have provided heroic support to desperate refugees.



Far from home: Syrian refugees disembark from a flooded raft on a beach at Lesbos last October (left); Stratis Valiamos (right).

received a staggering 851,319 of these people, with half a million landing on Lesbos alone. The Mediterranean is now the deadliest migration route in the world. Last year, 3,770 people died or went missing on this short sea crossing, made more perilous by people-smuggling gangs who frequently overload unseaworthy boats at gunpoint.

As signatories to the 1951 Refugee Convention, the European Union and its member states are responsible for providing reception and asylum. But the system is broken, falling far short of international law and the human-rights standards enshrined in the convention. Some of the factors driving this crisis are policy-driven, chief among them the European Union's failure to agree on and implement a coherent policy that acknowledges the unstoppable flow of displaced people; its attempts to reduce refugee numbers through the militarization of land and sea borders; its unrealistic €3 billion deal with Turkey to stem the flow; and its tendency to blame Greece for the crisis—or, worse, to insist that Greece shoulder an impossible burden.

Carlotta Sami, UNHCR's senior regional public-information officer for Southern Europe, says, "The EU needs to open safe, legal means of arrival. Even in a politicized environment, people should receive a dignified reception. This has been the dilemma, because meanwhile the humanitarian crisis continues to escalate." Even though this influx is the largest migration wave since World War II, 1 million people represent only 0.2 percent of Europe's population. "The European Union is the richest union in the world, with a population of 508 million," Sami continues. "Europe has the means and resources to cope."

Unwilling to share responsibility for the refugees, the EU expects Greece, now in its seventh year of deep recession, to be the gatekeeper for Europe simply by virtue of its geographical location. This February, the EU gave Greece a three-month deadline to greatly reduce migrant

ermen to assist in sea rescues. "On October 28, I was cooking when they rang around 5 PM and said: 'We have 300 people drowning on the open sea!' The conditions were very dangerous that day. I thought to myself: 'Even if I save one person, it's worth it.'" So Valiamos dropped everything and left immediately, taking his boat 12 miles out to sea. "When I reached the shipwreck, I saw many dead bodies in the water—babies, children, and adults. I cooperated with the Turkish fishermen to save as many people as possible."

Over 1 million people arrived in Europe by sea in 2015—the vast majority fleeing war and persecution in Syria and the wider Middle East, according to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the UN's refugee agency. Greece

“I saw many dead bodies in the water—babies, children, and adults.”

—fisherman Stratis Valiamos



sea crossings; if it doesn't comply, it risks expulsion from the 26-country, passport-free Schengen area. Greeks see this demand as undue punishment for not succeeding at the impossible task of securing their country's 8,497 miles of coastline—the longest sea border in the EU.

But while Greeks are angry at having become a scapegoat for Europe's immigration woes, they're far from satisfied with their own government's response. When it was in opposition, the leftist Syriza party—especially leader and future prime minister Alexis Tsipras—criticized the immigration policies of the mainstream parties as inhumane. Tsipras also vowed to close the country's migrant-detention centers, whose conditions had been called “degrading” by the European Court of Human Rights. The centers are now slated to stay open until 2018.

When the number of arrivals soared early last summer, many Greeks expected the response of Syriza, now in power, to be in line with its social policies. Greece is in economic crisis, they argue, but it's not a failed state, and the government has assets at its disposal. “Tsipras could have sent in the army, done *something*,” says Yanis, a 23-year-old delivery driver in Mytilini. “But he just talks—a lot of hot air. He spent the whole summer complaining to the EU and took no meaningful action.”

WHILE THE GOVERNMENT WAS SITTING on its hands and EU leaders floundered, the Greek people stepped into the gap, offering heroic practical support to the thousands of refugees arriving daily. Two cultural practices deeply embedded in Greek society—*philotimo*, honor and respect expressed as acts of generosity and sacrifice; and *philoxenia*, hospitality to strangers—may explain why Greeks, despite limited means, have been assisting people transiting through their country. Many Greeks also have refugee experiences in their family history. In the last hundred years, Greece has been through two world wars, the 1922 war with Turkey, a civil war, and a military dictatorship, each of which forced thousands to flee.

Fotis, a Sykamnias resident whose stone and wood house was built by his grandfather in 1887, says that last summer the village was so jammed with people arriving every day that it often took 30 minutes to drive 20 yards. Trash was piling up everywhere, and in the lane next to his house, groups of refugees were lighting fires, even in 100-degree heat. “I was so worried about the fire hazard that I bought a 90-foot hose and was constantly running to extinguish campfires—a whole summer of sleepless nights.” But Fotis (who requested that I use only his first name) continued to help transport refugees—and risked arrest in doing so, since it was a criminal offense until the UNHCR lobbied the Greek government to amend the law.

One morning in September, Fotis came across two Christian Syrians, a father and daughter, outside the village church. They'd seen the bell tower from their dinghy and had walked up from the beach. They were soaking wet, and the smugglers had stolen their luggage. “When I found them, they were helpless,” says Fotis. He took them to his home so they could bathe, eat, and sleep, and



Dire straits: Without adequate resources, refugees set up camp near the registration facility in Moria, Lesbos, last November.

“When I see people in distress, I can’t just sail past and leave them to drown. I have to save them.”

—Stratis Valiamos

he gave them dry clothes. “They stayed for three days. We cooked and played cards together and became friends. We kept in touch via text when they left, and I was happy to hear they made it to Germany.”

Natasha Tsangarides is a researcher on refugee issues for human-rights groups. Originally from London and now living on Lesbos, she arrived on the island late last June, among only a handful of volunteers on the north coast. “Until the end of August, it was total chaos. Huge numbers of people were arriving, and there

was no system in place for anything, even though the signs had been clear from the spring.”

Tsangarides says the state was unhelpful. The local government shut down the transit camp set up by volunteers at Molyvos, and at Mytilini, the national government allocated only a tiny booth, with two police officers and one photographer, to register tens of thousands of refugees. “It shows the complete disorganization and ineptitude of the Greek government, an absolute failure to have a concrete plan in place,” Tsangarides says. “But ultimate responsibility rests with the EU—and if Greece can’t execute its role properly, then the EU has massively failed.”

Last year, local groups were the only ones providing daily meals at Mytilini’s port and at the registration facility in nearby Moria set up in August. The PIKPA refugee shelter, established near Mytilini in 2012 to assist Greeks in crisis, operates entirely on volunteer labor and donations. “PIKPA serves the most vulnerable people arriving on Lesbos—shipwreck survivors, pregnant women, families with newborn babies and young children, asylum seekers looking for family reunion,” says Mytilini local and PIKPA volunteer Yulie Tzirou. In addition to providing short-term accommodation for transiting refugees, the camp is a central point for the distribution of humanitarian aid on Lesbos. Volunteers also cook and serve hundreds, sometimes thousands, of hot meals every day and have even boosted the capacity of NGOs on the island, like Mercy Worldwide.

THE WATERFRONT TAVERNA AT SYKAMNIAS, where fisherman Valiamos also works as a cook to make ends meet, has doubled as an emergency room, and babies have been resuscitated on its tables. “When I see people in distress, I can’t just sail past and leave them to drown. I have to save them,” Valiamos says. Last summer, he helped rescue 25 babies from a capsized dinghy. “Often there are so many people in the water, you have to choose whom to save. That day I brought the babies in first, not knowing if the parents would survive by the time we got back.”

By December, volunteer groups had transformed the Moria camp through improved sanitation, a field hospital, on-site storage, and tents. On the north coast,

40 miles from Moria, volunteer lifeguards from Proactiva Open Arms and Team Humanity had consolidated their sea-rescue teams and equipment, and the local group Platanos Refugee Solidarity had set up a winter beach camp to continue distributing hot meals and clothing to people getting off boats in freezing conditions.

But just as the volunteer and NGO efforts on Lesbos grew stronger and better coordinated, the EU-Greek crackdown on humanitarian volunteers began. On January 14, the Greek Coast Guard arrested three Spanish and two Danish nationals from Proem-Aid and Team Humanity on suspicion of human smuggling, as they were approaching a sinking boat that authorities claim was in international waters. They were released without charge after 36 hours and posting €30,000 in bail, but the case remains open pending investigation. In the same week, three British and two American volunteers were arrested for theft as they collected life vests from the municipal dump to use for making mattresses for the refugees. Greek volunteer groups report being threatened with eviction from their aid-distribution points, and they are increasingly angry that after a year of ignoring its responsibilities, the EU is now, as they put it, “criminalizing solidarity.”

The crackdown is intensifying as the European Union centralizes border security. EU border agency Frontex has deployed Rapid Border Intervention Teams, a land- and sea-border patrol with unprecedented independent powers, to work alongside Greek authorities. And on February 11, NATO—with the full support of the United States—deployed a naval force under German command to combat people-smuggling in the eastern Aegean and to reduce the number of migrants entering Europe via Turkey. Asylum seekers “saved” from boats intercepted in the Aegean can be returned to Turkey, which Greece has now formally declared a “safe third country.”

The deployment of NATO warships to stop the exodus from Turkey came just as some 70,000 refugees were amassing on the Turkish-Syrian border and 300,000 Aleppo civilians prepared to flee in the wake of a massive assault by the Assad regime, aided by heavy Russian bombing.

Last November, the European Union started classifying asylum seekers by nationality. Those not from Syria, Iraq, or Afghanistan are deemed economic migrants and cannot register to have their claims heard. The EU now wants to reintroduce the Dublin regulation, which mandates the return of asylum seekers to the first EU country they entered. These policies, alongside five new “hot spot” detention centers on the Greek islands and two refugee camps near Athens (due to open by the end of February, just as Macedonia prepares to permanently close its southern border) will trap thousands of people and ring-fence Greece, transforming it into a holding bay and deportation point—a permanent buffer zone against refugees trying to reach northern Europe.

The UNHCR, human-rights and humanitarian-aid groups, and European citizens in solidarity with refugees and opposed to what they call “Fortress Europe” continue to demand safe passage and a dignified reception for refugees.

Meanwhile, individuals like Stratis Valiamos continue to help those in need. As he recounts his many experiences of rescuing people at sea or retrieving dead bodies, his eyes show the sorrow and trauma of witnessing so much death and suffering. “The tragedy being repeated is that children and babies survive but have lost their parents,” Valiamos says. “Or parents survive but have lost their children.” ■

 The MIT Press



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—JERRY BROWN,
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(continued from page 2)

she was uniquely situated to know that the so-called "intelligence" on Iraq's alleged weapons of mass destruction was largely (if not entirely) hyped. Under these circumstances, her choice to follow the lead of President George W. Bush was a major setback for the cause of peace.

This history is directly relevant to the present. As an abstraction, the election of a woman to the presidency of the United States would be a positive gain. But when leading feminists advocate the election of Hillary Clinton and ignore entirely her record not only as a US senator but as secretary of state, this does the opposite. I am concerned that it sends the wrong message: that Clinton's gender matters more than her performance in office.

Pollitt seems to suggest that a "liberal" Hillary Clinton is no better or worse than others whom feminists might support. But it is instructive to compare her behavior as secretary of state with that of her successor, John Kerry. Since assuming this position, he has worked tirelessly to find agreement with international adversaries on a range of critical issues, in which the possibility of failure looms large. Secretary Clinton did nothing of the kind. Moreover, what is presently known about the internal deliberations of the first Obama administration makes clear that Clinton remained a policy "hawk" who, together with Defense Secretary Robert Gates, pushed a reluctant president in a militaristic direction—on the troop surge in Afghanistan, the bombing of Libya, the response to the Syrian civil war, and a range of other items.

Based on her past performance, there is every reason to fear that Hillary Clinton will become a president with a more

than usual penchant for military action. Before we put a "collective thumb on the scale" on her behalf, such worries should give us pause. CAROLYN EISENBERG
NEW YORK CITY

No Nukes Are Good Nukes

As usual, Andrew Bacevich is on point in diagnosing the reasons why we have endless war and a military-industrial complex run amok ["Who Runs the Pentagon?," Feb. 8].

While his analysis is much appreciated, I wish he had also noted the apparent lack of any viable grassroots movement to oppose such reckless spending. In the 1970s, the Pentagon's plans to build the B-1 bomber sparked a truly national movement—led by the American Friends Service Committee and Clergy and Laity Concerned—to demand that defense dollars be converted into spending on schools, roads, and other worthy projects. Yet today, no one seems to care about the Pentagon's plans to roll out a new nuclear-weapons delivery system that will cost this country billions. Where's the outrage?

SETH KERSHNER
LEE, MASS.

Flint Without Fire

How can we have an acknowledged bunch of baby poisoners running around in Michigan ["Poisoning the Public in Flint," Feb. 15], but nobody has been put behind bars or even charged with any crime?

MICHAEL HUDSON
SAN FRANCISCO

Correction

Chenxin Jiang's "Memories of the Mao Era" [Feb. 29] stated that the Chinese writer Ji Xianlin was born just a few weeks before the overthrow of the Kuomintang. In fact, he was born just before the overthrow of the Qing Dynasty.

Books & the Arts.



A photography class in a cabbage patch at Black Mountain College.

BARBARA MORGAN / COURTESY OF WESTERN REGIONAL ARCHIVES, STATE ARCHIVES OF NORTH CAROLINA

And There Were Snakes

by BARRY SCHWABSKY

Can art be taught? That question isn't as old or as hoary as one might imagine. For many centuries, artists *were* taught, either through a studio apprenticeship or, later, in a formal academy. It only became possible to think of art as something different in the 19th century, when the old system fell apart and it seemed conceivable that anyone could be an artist. But very few people were. Perhaps being an artist was the result of some peculiar inner drive or necessity, some genius that burned in certain kinds of people—something they were born with rather than something that they learned. The question has by now fueled two centuries' worth of bar banter, family quarrels, and panel discussions. What keeps the conversation going is that many of the people who say that art can't be taught still make their living by teaching it. Teaching does have its own rewards, and so does trying

to learn, whether the learning "takes" or not.

A related question is easier to answer: Can the art of teaching art be exhibited? No, but people keep trying. The ambitious show "Leap Before You Look: Black Mountain College 1933–1957," at the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston, is the latest such effort. (It will be on view at the Hammer Museum at the University of California, Los Angeles, from February 21 to May 15, and then at the Wexner Center for the Arts at Ohio State University in Columbus from September 17 to January 1, 2017. A handsome catalog is available from Yale University Press.) In fact, Black Mountain exhibitions have become a genre unto themselves. "Leap Before You Look," curated by Helen Molesworth, formerly of the ICA/Boston and now at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, is the fourth that I know of. The first, which I saw in 2002, was "Black Mountain

College: Una Aventura Americana," curated by Vincent Katz, at the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia in Madrid. Then came "Starting at Zero: Black Mountain College 1933–1957," curated by Caroline Collier and Michael Harrison, at the Arnolfini in Bristol, England, and Kettle's Yard, University of Cambridge, in 2005 and 2006. And last summer, I paid a visit to the Hamburger Bahnhof Museum für Gegenwart in Berlin, which mounted "Black Mountain: An Interdisciplinary Experiment 1933–1957," curated by Eugen Blume and Gabriele Knapstein.

Why the recurring preoccupation with a short-lived, unaccredited school at the back of beyond, which never had enough students to pay its way? It could be the school's believe-it-or-not story and how, the more you learn about it, the more unlikely it seems. The tale begins in 1933, when an unorthodox, arrogant classics professor named John An-

drew Rice and several of his colleagues were purged from Rollins College in Florida. A number of their fellow professors resigned in protest, and some students withdrew as well. Bent on starting a college of their own, they found a complex of buildings for rent near Asheville, North Carolina, and some start-up money—but not much. At first, the faculty worked without salaries, but at least they owned the joint: The papers of incorporation specified that “the sole membership of the corporation” would be “the whole body of the faculty.” In other words, there was no board of directors and no non-teaching administration either, so the instructors had no other masters than themselves.

There was splendor and misery at Black Mountain, which was run according to the will of its teachers and, to a great extent, its students. The faculty believed that the curriculum should reflect what the students needed or desired to learn. This principle runs contrary not only to the present conception of the student as a consumer or client who is to be supplied with certain knowledge, but also to the designs of the conservative governors of North Carolina, Wisconsin, and other states, who believe that they should have the final say over what’s being taught and who’s doing the teaching at their state colleges and universities. At Black Mountain, teachers and students committed themselves to shared undertakings, the educational equivalent of socialism: from each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs.

There’s some irony in the fact that two of the three stops on the “Leap Before You Look” tour are university campuses. Between Black Mountain and most of today’s universities (and art schools), there lies an unbridgeable gap between teachers willing and able to make a full commitment to students who would do the same, and institutions staffed by poorly paid adjuncts who’d be mad to invest any more care in their fleeting charges than Uber drivers do in their next fare. It’s the gap between a society of members who take responsibility for the whole, and bloated administrations and boards that imagine schools can be run like corporations. It’s the gap between the desire to live and work together as a community day and night, and the fantasy that massive open online courses will allow fewer teachers to impart information to ever more numerous and ever more atomized recipients. It’s the gap between a desire for equality, on the one hand, and the bottom line of profit-making corporations, on the other.

Art education too has become a casualty of the corporatization of higher learning,

as shown by the recent disasters at Cooper Union in New York City and the University of Southern California in Los Angeles. The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art, as it’s officially known, is a small but renowned school of architecture, engineering, and art that, from its founding in 1859 until 2013, offered a full-tuition scholarship to every student—a free education at the highest level. Its alumni include the likes of Lee Krasner, Eva Hesse, and Alex Katz. But a new president’s desire to make his mark by spending hundreds of millions of dollars on new buildings—over the objections of the faculty—ultimately led the school to near bankruptcy and the abrogation of Peter Cooper’s desire that the school he founded be “open and free to all.” And what about the board, whose responsibility it was to protect Cooper’s vision? As Fusion’s Felix Salmon tartly observed in an excellent summary of the tragedy: “Faced with a loan whose terms were unacceptable on multiple levels, the Cooper Union board did exactly what you would expect them to do. They agreed to everything.” Although the state attorney general’s office has intervened and called for a return “to a sustainable, full tuition scholarship model,” it’s hard to see how that will ever happen.

The mammoth University of Southern California is very different from Cooper Union, but for a time its Roski School of Art and Design was home to a tiny graduate program that was among the country’s best. Its troubles came to a head last spring, when the entire first-year class of seven students dropped out and several faculty members resigned. The reason was that the Roski School seems to have decided that the fine arts are out-of-date and no longer need to be funded. Its new mission was to become an incubator for, as the jargon would have it, “the next generation of disruptive inventors and professional thought leaders across a multitude of global industries” rather than a handful of painters, sculptors, photographers, and conceptual artists. The school turned its back on young people less interested in learning to help businesses design and sell cool products than in—as the Roski Seven put it in an open letter explaining their action—“devising new spaces for collective weirdness and joy.”

Given this sort of educational malpractice, the fascination with Black Mountain as an alternative is easy to understand. It’s no accident that Molesworth, the curator of “Leap Before You Look,” also chaired a roundtable discussion on Cooper, Roski, and art school in general for last October’s *Artforum*. At its best, her

show conveys an exhilarating sense of the school as an educational utopia in which one might have helped to build a new seminar room in the morning, thrown pots in the afternoon, studied history in the evening, and criticized after dinner, just as one pleased, without ever becoming a builder, potter, historian, or critic. Black Mountain wasn’t an art school, but rather a school where art was central, so the exhibition isn’t mainly of works, though many of those on display are excellent. There’s an extraordinary canvas by Cy Twombly, painted when he was a 23-year-old student, which shows that by 1951 he had learned enough from elders like Franz Kline and Robert Motherwell for his work to surpass theirs in visceral intensity. Also entrancing is Ruth Asawa’s hanging sculpture of organic forms in woven wire.

But seeing and hearing works created by those who taught at Black Mountain—whether famous (notably Josef Albers, who was Black Mountain’s leading figure from the mid-1930s until 1949, and his wife Anni, a renowned weaver and fabric designer, as well as John Cage and R. Buckminster Fuller, among others) or more or less forgotten (Leo Amino, Mary Callery, José de Creeft, Joseph Fiore)—will never reveal much about what it was like to study there. Nor will seeing the works of their students, even those who became as renowned as Robert Rauschenberg or Kenneth Noland, or “artist’s artists” like Ray Johnson and Pat Passlof, or even simply figures who seem to have made a profound impression on the life of the school but less so on the wider world (for instance, Dan Rice, who arrived at Black Mountain intending to study musical composition but ended up becoming an Abstract Expressionist painter).

Photography plays a more interesting role in the exhibition than painting or sculpture, ceramics or weaving, because of its dual nature as document and autonomous art. Even many photographs that were clearly intended as formal exercises, like the architectural studies by Hazel Larsen Archer and Jacqueline Gourevitch, or Gourevitch’s image of chairs in a seminar room, reveal something about how the college looked, helping us project ourselves back into a vanished time. And all the images of dancers! The body’s thrusts and pivots, the structural alphabet of the dance, become metaphors for the photographer’s breakdown of the visual field into active parts—whether in an image by Larsen in which Merce Cunningham seems to be distending toward infinity as his head and arm glide up and out of the frame while his feet stretch back toward an earth that will



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The longtime Cuba correspondent for *The Nation*, Peter Kornbluh, is Cuba analyst at the National Security Archive in Washington, DC. He is the author of *Bay of Pigs Declassified*, co-author of *The Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962*, and co-author of the recently published *Back Channel to Cuba: The Hidden History of Negotiations Between Washington and Cuba*, chosen by *Foreign Affairs* as Best Book of the Year.

Charles Bittner



For almost two decades, Charles Bittner has served as *The Nation's* academic liaison. He's hosted five previous *Nation* trips to Cuba and teaches in the sociology department at St. John's University.

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no longer touch them, or in some pictures by Stan VanDerBeek that turn a dancer's body into an anonymous silhouette vibrating in time as much as in space. To the extent that "Leap Before You Look" succeeds in evoking some of the collective weirdness and joy of Black Mountain, it's probably through the film clips of dance performances by Cunningham and Katherine Litz.

Most surprising, perhaps, are some portraits of students and faculty done up in fantastical costumes and makeup for a 1940 Valentine's Day ball. Shot with color slide film—and more evocative in their artifice than your average Cindy Sherman—they're the work of Josef Albers; I assume their evocative red-and-brown tonality is a result of deterioration of the original Kodachrome slides (the cyan dye would have faded at a faster rate than the magenta), but it only adds to the pictures' atmosphere. It's a chemical version of the redshift that, as physicists tell us, occurs when objects move away from us in space and time.

To a great extent, redshift also explains a flaw of "Leap Before You Look" and last year's Berlin show about Black Mountain (and their compendious accompanying catalogs). They succeed by wrapping up everything about the college in a romantic haze, by using a subtle tonal modification that makes the picture more attractive as it becomes less true to life. If you turn to Martin Duberman's passionate, probing, and deeply detailed history of the college, *Black Mountain: An Exploration in Community* (1972), you'll see a very different picture. Don't get me wrong: The idealism, the creative élan, the infectious sense of possibility that the exhibitions highlight—these were all part of Black Mountain, and the school's implicit promise was fulfilled surprisingly often. But there were illusions, too. What one of the first English instructors hired by the college later observed about his time there is just as true of the viewer today who laps up all these wonderfully seductive images: "We achieved the releases and raptures of revolutionary enthusiasm without the discouragements and inconveniences of revolutionary struggle."

As that young educator would soon learn, discouragements and inconveniences aplenty were on their way. And I'm not just echoing the views of someone like Helen Frankenthaler, who stopped by to visit Clement Greenberg when he was teaching at Black Mountain one summer and found it wasn't quite what she'd gotten used to at Bennington College: "The food was ter-

rible. Most of the people were dingy. The barracks were unspeakable. Most of the personal situations were nightmares. And there were snakes." Well, I suppose every Eden has those. More to the point was that the community's internal politics turned out to be nearly impossible to negotiate with grace. An educational philosophy based on "the whole person" gave no indication of how to square the conflicting goals of community and individuality. As Duberman observed, "Since Black Mountain prided itself on not having itemized rules of conduct or traditional measures for academic performance, infractions and inabilities were difficult to pinpoint." Consequently, "a negative judgment was more devastating than ordinarily, for presumably it was based on an assessment of the whole person rather than on some narrow aspect of performance like grade average. To be disapproved of at Black Mountain, in other words, was the equivalent of being labeled an unworthy human being—not merely a poor student."

Tension was rife among the faculty; dominating personalities were feared as potential dictators. Personal differences tended to escalate into vaguely defined but highly dramatic conflicts of educational philosophy or political position. For instance, the arrival in 1942 of the abrasive young British critic and translator Eric Bentley led to a panic that he was spreading communism among the students. And concerns about sexual mores and personal appearance could descend to levels that now seem ridiculous. "The debate on how short girls' shorts should be, whether bare feet should be allowed in the dining hall, and whether 'seminude' sunbathing was appropriate in front of the studies building, were perennials at Black Mountain," according to Duberman. Of course, all of this has to be taken in context: As a liberal enclave in the conservative South, the college felt constantly compelled to keep up a show of respectability; there could be real consequences if the proprieties were ignored, as when a couple of female students who'd gone hitchhiking were arrested as prostitutes. An aversion to the risk of discord with the college's neighbors also delayed the hiring of black faculty members and the admission of black students until 1945, although some members of the college had been agitating for integration for years. In the end, Black Mountain found it almost impossible to attract black applicants.

The college went through a whole series of feuds, purges, and changes of leadership in its brief lifetime: John Andrew Rice, the visionary who'd started it all, was ousted

after seven years. Yet the exploratory impulse was never snuffed out. In fact, it could be argued that Black Mountain's most incandescent period was the last one, from 1951 until it closed six years later, when the poet Charles Olson was the school's dominant personality. Olson considered that he was returning the college to something like Rice's original radical vision for it after a relatively more conservative interregnum. Olson's Black Mountain was, of course, more literary a place than it had ever been, and even more determinedly experimental. He seems not to have concerned himself with the length of young women's shorts.

Black Mountain's founder had in his own way anticipated the Maoist doctrine of continuous revolution. "At one time Rice said he thought the college should disperse every ten years into smaller units," recalled M.C. Richards, the English professor turned potter who'd been instrumental in bringing Olson to the campus. "This was to avoid too much stability. It was to be faithful to the chaos out of which creativity constellates." No one was better at cultivating chaos and spangling the atmosphere with its constellations than Olson. Who else would have thought of suggesting to a fellow poet, Robert Creeley, that he fill in as a teacher of biology? When Creeley pointed out that he'd never studied the subject, even in high school, Olson "said, 'Terrific, you can learn something,'" Creeley recalled. "Subsequently, I realized that teaching is teaching. It has, paradoxically, nothing to do with the subject." In other words, true learning, as described by Jacques Rancière in *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*, is fostered by teaching what one does not know.

As Rancière wrote, this kind of education can never be institutionalized; "it is the natural method of the human mind," yet everything works against it. No wonder Black Mountain could never come to terms with the outside world or itself. Robert Duncan, in his extraordinary poem "The Song of the Border-Guard"—shown in "Leap Before You Look" as a broadside accompanied by a Twombly linocut—imagines "a barbarian host at the border-line of sense." Which side of the border was Black Mountain on? Were its denizens the barbarians readying themselves to overcome the common sense of Eisenhower's America, or were they guardians of a deeper sense of life and learning against the yahoo horde surrounding them? No matter. "The enamoured guards desert their posts / harkening to the lion-smell of a poem / that rings in their ears." And the poem of Black Mountain still rings in ours. ■



Jerusalem With the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, from *Vues en Palestine* (1804).

Ottoman Encounters

by NICHOLAS GUYATT

Is the War on Terror really a war against Islam? After 9/11, this was a charge leveled regularly at the policies of President George W. Bush, who found numerous creative ways of denying it. “Ours is not a campaign against the Muslim faith,” he insisted while the ruins of the World Trade Center still smoldered. “The face of terror is not the true faith of Islam.” With visits to mosques and dutiful Eid messages, Bush insisted that the 9/11 attackers were “traitors to their own faith” who had tried “to hijack Islam itself.” It didn’t help the president’s cause that so many conservative commentators fudged the distinction between what Bush called “true Islam” and what others described as “fascism with

American Apostles

When Evangelicals Entered the World of Islam.

By Christine Leigh Heyrman.

Hill and Wang. 340 pp. \$30.

an Islamic face,” as Christopher Hitchens wrote in this magazine in 2001.

Even before the recent attacks in Paris, there was no shortage of support in Europe for the view that Islam is at war with modernity and Western values. “To hell with their culture,” Richard Dawkins declared on Bill Maher’s *Real Time* last October, raging that Islam’s putative barbarities—“a woman who’s forced to wear a beekeeper suit in the hot sun,” Maher offered—are given a free pass by the so-called Jurassic left. The United States has remained fertile ground for Islamophobia. While Barack Obama’s reliance on drones rather than occupying armies has put a new face on US imperium in the Middle East,

conservative commentators have presented the rise of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria as a vindication of their warnings about jihadist expansionism. According to a YouGov/Huffington Post poll this past spring, 55 percent of Americans had an unfavorable view of Islam, a statistic that may explain Donald Trump’s campaign pledge to ban Muslims from entering the United States. As for the president, his willingness to assassinate “Islamists” from Afghanistan to Somalia seems not to have persuaded the far right of his loyalties. Does anyone believe that Ben Carson’s extraordinary remarks on *Meet the Press* last September—“I would not advocate that we put a Muslim in charge of this nation”—were unconnected to the persistent attempts of the “birthers” and their allies to uncover the true loyalties of Barack Hussein Obama?

Those who remember the final years of the Cold War—or even, say, the Clinton presidency—will know that there was a time in American history when “radical Islam” appeared some way down the news agenda, if it entered popular consciousness at all. In the aftermath of 9/11, journalists and schol-

Nicholas Guyatt teaches at Cambridge and is the author of *Bind Us Apart: How Enlightened Americans Invented Racial Segregation* (Basic).

ars reminded us of American support for the mujahideen in Afghanistan and the long relationship between the US government and the ultraconservative rulers of Saudi Arabia. In *American Apostles*, Christine Leigh Heyrman aims to recover a much earlier episode in this story: as the subtitle puts it, the moment “when evangelicals entered the world of Islam.” She follows a series of US missionaries who, in the early 19th century, abandoned the boosterism of the American Republic for the alien and baffling landscapes of the Middle East. Seeking souls in the broad expanse of the Ottoman Empire, skipping from Anatolia to Cairo to Jerusalem, these men married an intense study of Islam with a fervent hope that the peoples of the region could be brought to Christ. Heyrman carefully explains how these crusaders became fascinated by the potential of their mission, but the book’s most thrilling sections recount their struggles when things didn’t turn out as they’d imagined.

America’s first encounter with Islam predated the Revolutionary War: Thousands of African Muslims fell victim to the slave systems of the Caribbean and the southern mainland in the 17th and 18th centuries, their names and traditions forming part of the patchwork Creole culture that became African America. For the United States, Islam only became a question of national interest when the merchant vessel *Betsey* was seized by Moroccan pirates in 1784. Less than a year had passed since British troops had withdrawn from New York Harbor. Dozens of American sailors were taken in chains to Algiers and Tripoli, where the leaders of the so-called Barbary States awaited a ransom payment. The idea of Muslims enslaving Christians discomfited American observers, but the challenge from the Barbary States was understood principally in diplomatic and economic terms. In 1797, when the outgoing Washington administration finally struck a “treaty of peace and friendship” with Tripoli, US negotiators rubbished the idea of a clash of civilizations between Christianity and Islam. “As the government of the United States is not, in any sense, founded on the Christian religion,” the treaty declared, “it has in itself no character of enmity against the laws, religion, or tranquility of Mussulmen.” Both sides agreed that “no pretext arising from religious opinions shall ever produce an interruption of the harmony existing between the two countries.”

The United States paid a fee to the Barbary States for the safety of its commerce

until 1815, when escalating demands for US tribute and increasingly brazen attacks by Barbary pirates persuaded President James Madison to adopt a different approach. He sent 27 warships, battle-hardened by the War of 1812, to demand the return of American captives and property. This early experiment in gunboat diplomacy was wildly successful. The Barbary States granted more favorable terms than they had offered to any European nation, and the United States secured free passage for its sailors at no further expense. British and French officials marveled at the bravado of the upstart republic, and North Africa soon fell under the sway of European imperialism. But there’s little evidence that Americans saw this as a triumph of Christianity over Islam. Instead, coming on the heels of another war with Britain, it suggested that the United States had decisively established itself in the international system.

East of the Barbary States, the Ottoman Empire held sway through the 19th century. The Ottomans managed a vast territory that extended from the Balkans through Greece and Turkey into Syria, Lebanon, Israel-Palestine, Jordan, Egypt, Iraq, and parts of Saudi Arabia. Americans had an obvious affinity with this region—it was, after all, the cradle of the Christian faith, which played a major role in shaping the life of the early Republic. Before 1815, however, the contemporary contours of the biblical lands remained largely unknown to most in the United States. No American journalist would be permanently stationed overseas until the 1840s, and for most of the 19th century the “Holy Land” remained the province of travel writers, diplomats, and (later) tourists. When US missionaries began work there in the 1820s, then, they became crucial conduits for American knowledge about the region. No matter that their dispatches were unreliable, that they weren’t always candid about what they found, or that their missionary bosses routinely trimmed their copy before releasing it to the public. They were mapping a land of enormous significance to American Christians, and they had the field to themselves. “What *National Geographic* offered the pre-Internet twentieth century,” Heyrman writes, “missionary chronicles did for the pre-photography early nineteenth century.”

The hero of Heyrman’s book is Pliny Fisk, who became one of the first US missionaries in the Middle East. Fisk was one of eight siblings born into a poor farming family in western Massachusetts in 1792. His sharp mind and earnest piety offered

a way out of his family’s hardscrabble existence. He attended Middlebury College, where he labored valiantly to catch up with his expensively educated peers; and then Andover Theological Seminary, where he trained to become a Congregational minister. Fisk came of age at an important moment in the history of American education and religion. Universities like Harvard, Yale, and Princeton had begun to distance themselves from both the old-school Calvinism of the 18th century and the new wave of religious revivalism that was breaking over the Republic. The upstart Methodist and Baptist denominations insisted that preachers could save souls without first obtaining a graduate degree, but the practitioners of the “New Divinity”—mainline Protestants concentrated in New England—maintained the importance of a proper education for the clergy. Andover was one of several new seminaries that emerged in the early 19th century to save would-be clergymen from religious liberalism and hayseed evangelicalism.

The young men who moved through these seminaries in the 1810s were expected to do much more than win souls in the United States. In 1810, the Congregational Church founded the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, the nation’s first major missionary organization. In 1812, the ABCFM established its first outpost in India. By 1835, it had sent missionaries to Sri Lanka, Hawaii, China, Indonesia, Liberia, and South Africa. For Fisk, whose horizons had once been bounded by the Green Mountains, this vista must have seemed limitless. For the sponsors of the missionary enterprise, on the other hand, a global stage would advance a more intimate drama: By reaping endless harvests in the mission fields of East Asia or Africa, New Divinity supporters would consolidate their brand in America’s crowded religious marketplace.

The strength, and weakness, of *American Apostles* is that it doesn’t make this larger drama—the battle to found a global empire—its subject. Other recent histories of the American missionary movement, like Emily Conroy-Krutz’s *Christian Imperialism*, explore the vast reach of the ABCFM’s overseas activities in the early 19th century. For Heyrman, the story belongs to Fisk, whose wonderfully detailed journal she mines deeply throughout the book. This sharp focus offers an intimate and compelling glimpse of one missionary’s hopes and fears. But it also makes it harder to see his story as a distinctively American one. For one thing, Fisk’s experiences of the

Middle East were heavily mediated by the British missionary movement. He prepared for his trip by reading British accounts of the region's spiritual potential and challenges. When Fisk and his colleague, Levi Parsons, reached their staging post of Malta in 1820, they happily sheltered under the wing of William Jowett, the local representative of the Church Missionary Society of London. Jowett could hardly fail to impress the Americans: He was handsome, affable, and usually accompanied by his clever and beautiful wife, Martha, who knew at least as many languages as her husband. The friendly deference that the Americans offered the Jowetts could serve as a metaphor for the broader US presence in the Middle East. It was British influence that created the narrow space in which foreign missionaries could operate, and the United States was very much the junior partner in the pursuit of religious imperialism.

Even the British understood that their proselytizing powers in the Middle East were limited. Unlike Hawaii or China, where missionaries could work with a freer hand, the Middle East offered a complex and carefully regulated terrain for missionary activity. Heyrman's subtitle is misleading in this respect: "The world of Islam" is a poor description for an empire in which Muslims lived alongside Jews, Greek Christians, Armenian Christians, Catholics, and many other minorities. It would be exaggerating the point to say that the Ottomans oversaw an empire of inclusion, but until the mid-19th century they maintained more than a dozen separate mercantile, legal, and religious systems for the minorities under their sway. This created an obvious opportunity for British and American missionaries, who assured the Ottomans that they would target Catholics and Orthodox Christians rather than Muslims. To Pliny Fisk, virtually the entire population of Smyrna needed saving: "We see now before us a city containing more than 100,000 souls," he wrote in 1820, "led captive by Satan at his will." But unless they were willing to embrace martyrdom, Protestant missionaries would be unable to make a play for the Muslim majority.

The idea of bearing witness in Cairo or Jerusalem might have stirred the spirit of students at Andover, but it was "out of the question" for the young Americans and Britons stationed in the Middle East. There was to be no preaching in the marketplace or outside the mosque for Fisk and his associates, who contented themselves with learning local languages and studying the Koran. Their principal means of evangelizing was the circulation of missionary literature, via translations of the tracts and pamphlets that had been the

backbone of proselytizing in Britain and especially the United States. Heyrman concedes the paradox of attempting to convert peoples with low levels of literacy through the printed word. Many of these tracts—which appeared in nearly a dozen languages—were aimed at the substantial non-Muslim populations of the region, whose spiritual welfare was beyond the immediate control of Ottoman officials. The translation of Christian materials into Arabic (and, via lithography, into the ornate calligraphy that graced copies of the Koran) suggests a broader ambition among the missionaries. Fisk was initially thrilled to see how easy it was to persuade the locals of Smyrna to take one of his pamphlets; he was less thrilled to discover that pharmacists were using Protestant tracts to wrap medicine, or that the Good News was being torn and folded by gun owners to create rifle cartridges.

With limited opportunities to complete his mission, Fisk spent more and more of his time trying to understand Islam. Heyrman's account of his efforts is especially impressive, chronicling a process that she calls (in one of the book's many felicitous descriptions) "othering" and "brothering." American missionaries arrived in the Middle East with an unshakable faith in the Protestant message and a passionate determination to win souls. While Pliny Fisk could easily characterize Smyrna as a city bound for hell and Islam as a false religion, he also brought with him the universalist assumption that Muslims (and the other peoples living under Ottoman rule) were open to reason and persuasion. American missionaries spent countless hours in conversation with imams, Arabic teachers, and other learned men, and envisaged these keepers of the faith becoming the beachhead for a general conversion effort. But the Muslims they encountered seemed absolutely immovable in their faith—disconcertingly so, given the motley and inconstant state of religion in the United States. If *American Apostles* sometimes overreaches—as in its suggestion that Fisk and his associates feared the world might fall to Islam—it often captures sharp truths, like the missionaries' pointed nervousness about the piety of Muslim men. Heyrman reminds us that women were usually seen as the most reliable carriers of spiritual enthusiasm in American religious revivals. In the Middle East, by contrast, it was men who took the leading role in sustaining a public culture of religious devotion. Since men controlled the economic and political sphere in both the Ottoman Empire and the American Republic, the missionaries feared that Islam might have considerable advantages over the New Divinity.

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The heart of *American Apostles* is Fisk's five-year voyage through the reaches of the Ottoman Empire and his effort to understand the lure of Islam. Heyrman can't quite resist the temptation to show Fisk becoming unmoored as he peers into this foreign world. During his stay in Jerusalem from 1823 to '24, he makes a trip to a particularly beautiful mosque in Acre, in what is now northern Israel. "Lost in admiration," Fisk briefly seems to embrace the aesthetic and spiritual affinities that link his own faith to that of the people he's come to convert. Heyrman depicts the American retreating from the edge of this dangerous insight, and there's something pat about the suggestion that Fisk nearly succumbed when dazzled by the mosque's sublimities. But her underlying argument—that Fisk was a rapt observer of this alien culture—is an important one.

In 1823, a rival to Fisk came to Palestine. His name was Jonas King, and he was another New England missionary. The two men knew each other at Andover and traveled together through the Middle East, but Heyrman styles them as opposites. Fisk's patient bookishness seems even more appealing when set alongside King's bald machismo. While Fisk turns inward in his spiritual accounting, King is loud, crude, and self-serving in his dispatches to American religious periodicals. (Heyrman suggests that King would have made a successful dime novelist in the American West of the late 19th century.) King's private journals have never been found, which means that we don't know whether he shared any of the doubts that so vividly defined Fisk's engagement with Islam. But on the basis of King's dispatches from Palestine, Heyrman views him very differently from her hero: He becomes the brash American to Fisk's sensitive cosmopolitan.

If his public persona can be relied on, King was a different kind of missionary than Pliny Fisk. He had few scruples about supplying American readers with an account of Ottoman torpor that indulged their prejudices. He also liked to tell stories of his own derring-do—standing up to Ottoman soldiers, fleeing angry crowds—that would have seemed indecorous even if they had been true. It matters to *American Apostles* that King is a cowboy, and something of a phony, because Heyrman has a bigger argument to make about the significance of his sojourn in the Middle East. King's "combination of macho swagger with the fervent expression of Christian piety and an aggressive stance towards the Muslim world exerts a broad influence and appeal in the

present-day United States," she writes. "It helps to explain why a twice-born president with no experience of combat, days after declaring a preemptive war against Iraq, donned a flight suit, landed on an aircraft carrier, and proclaimed victory."

It's odd that after paying such close attention to Fisk, Heyrman would present Jonas King as the figure who really mattered. Although King's dispatches clearly drew an audience in the United States, American and British missionary organizations pivoted away from engagements with Islam after 1830. Even during the 1820s, when King's clumsy dispatches made their way into American magazines and newspapers, most US observers were interested not in the travails of the missionaries, but in the dramatic uprising of the Greeks against Ottoman rule. The Greek war of independence began soon after Fisk arrived in the Middle East, was still ongoing when he died in 1825, and outlasted King's four years in the region. (The Greeks prevailed in 1832.) As was their custom, Americans were fascinated by another people's struggle for independence. They were also happy to anatomize the religious backwardness of the Turks. But because the Greeks had never been forced to embrace Islam, American magazines and newspapers couldn't find easy evidence of a holy war in the Peloponnese. Some American commentators thought that

the modern-day Greeks were as superstitious and unrefined as their oppressors. Most were content to tally and condemn Ottoman despotism, like the piracy of the Barbary States, without undue emphasis on the eternal battle between the Cross and the Crescent. Against the backdrop of these dramatic events, which drew an American audience far beyond evangelical circles, the pioneering missions of Fisk and King were a sideshow.

In the same vein, it seems a stretch to sift the dispatches of the two men for the origins of American Islamophobia. For one thing, as the remarks of Trump and Dawkins remind us, evangelical religion has no monopoly on the production or dissemination of hostility toward Islam. Even among those conservative Christians who have been fiercest in their assault on "Islamofascism"—Franklin Graham, say, or John Hagee—there's a clear reliance on an apocalyptic strain of Protestant thinking that was fashioned in the late 19th century and forged by the struggles of Israel in the 20th. Tracing the roots of our contemporary problems to a largely forgotten past is one of the most important things that a good work of history can do. But *American Apostles* makes a lasting contribution in a very different register: It reminds us that, in attempting to remake foreign worlds and peoples, even the most ardent crusaders can have second thoughts. ■

Autopsies of Manners

by CHARLES TAYLOR

Some novelists write comedies of manners. Ruth Rendell wrote autopsies of manners. The 73 novels and short-story collections she published were chilly and unforgiving, written with the precision of a scalpel wielded by someone who waits until the blood has settled, the better to observe, probe, and describe the body laid before her with as little muss as possible. Rendell peeled back the layers and described exactly what she saw. Her method allowed no pretense of unfamiliarity, no false shock at whatever she found in her dissections, whether curiosities or diseases. But neither was there any nihilism.

It's tempting to think of Rendell in relation to another English artist, the painter Francis Bacon, whose subjects often looked as

Dark Corners

By Ruth Rendell.
Scribner. 288 pp. \$26.

if they had undergone an autopsy by hatchet. But whether screaming in horror or lying in ravaged repose, Bacon's subjects mocked the impulse to turn art into statements of empathy. Pity and terror were beside the point, Bacon suggested, when suffering was the fact of existence. The quintessential Bacon image, capturing both his vision and his method, is *Figure With Meat* (1954), in which the screaming pope is less important than the hanging sides of beef framing him.

For all the cool control of her books, all of the refusal to be scandalized, Rendell could not, as Bacon did, accept the ugliness she saw. With her death last May at the age of 85, the contemporary English novel lost its finest and most stringent moralist. Not

Charles Taylor is a writer and teacher based in New York City.

that there was anything prim or scolding in Rendell's work. As a writer, she possessed a piercing knowledge of how the minor sins of pettiness, vanity, and hypocrisy often slide effortlessly into the commission of larger sins. Her severe contemplation of those sins, small and large, seemed that of an appalled humanist in an appalling age.

It's why Rendell's Inspector Reginald Wexford, over the course of 24 novels spanning the prime of his career to his retirement, never becomes a wise and charming coderger. He is a man whose impatience is directly linked to his accumulation of experience, his conviction that humanity should be able to do better, despite all the evidence to the contrary. Wexford isn't gruff or sarcastic in the manner of hard-boiled heroes, nor is he an eccentric or a "character" in the manner common to the English detective novel and epitomized by the work of Agatha Christie, which Rendell loathed. Wexford doesn't dispense warmth easily to strangers; instead, he acquits himself with polite formality on social and professional occasions. His inner monologue, though, is that of a man who has no impulse to shield himself from what he really thinks. He knows, for instance, that he loves his daughter Sheila, a successful actress, more than his other daughter Sylvia, whose slightly disheveled life irritates him, and who is aware of how her father judges her. The history of Wexford's partnership with the detective working under him, Mike Burden, is one of withheld approbation slowly turning into professional respect and genuine friendship (just as Burden grows from a somewhat brash young man to a shrewd and seasoned veteran).

A police procedural is an accumulation of information that results in solving the case. In a Wexford procedural, the eventual resolution of whodunit offers little sense of closure. The narrative revelations typically lay bare transgressions that are more desperate than villainous, as well as psychic scuff marks and wounds that have already done lasting damage to both victim and culprit. And none of them, in Rendell's pitiless view, excuses the crimes now on display.

The crime novelist Val McDermid makes a convincing case that the 24 Wexford novels—the first, *From Doon With Death*, was published in 1964; the last, *No Man's Nightingale*, in 2013—provide a survey of the changes in British society, as women and people of color join the workforce, as the populace becomes less Anglo, as issues like domestic violence cease to be solely

regarded as private matters. They also embody, in the figure of Wexford, the unsteady balance of contemporary life: the belief that a person, by action and example, must stand against cruelty versus the simultaneous urge to take refuge. For Wexford, that refuge is his cherished wife, Dora.

This is clear in the closing paragraphs of *No Man's Nightingale*, which are imbued with the sense of leave-taking—some of it relieved, some regretful. Wexford is toting



Ruth Rendell

up, ready to be done with those he found unpleasant, sad over the woman he will not see though he'd like to, wary of those he may encounter again, and—perhaps the hardest bit of honesty here—not ready to give in to the false hope that one of his own blood will be shielded from the unhappiness that awaits him. And, at the end, there is the refuge of Dora, "who stood on the other side," in the home they have made, though there is no assurance that the thoughts that accompanied him will leave him at the threshold. It's a passage of both engagement and retreat, and after nearly 50 years spent with this man, a far less comforting one than you might expect of an author taking her own leave of the character she has described as being less her alter ego than a portrait of herself.

The passage that best represents what is distinctive about Rendell's fiction is the study of precarious balance in the opening paragraphs of the *The Keys to the Street* (1996):

The park is deserted by night. That is, the intention is that it should be deserted.... No vagrant could sleep undisturbed under the lee of the pavilions or the bandstand, but the police cannot search everywhere every night. The canal bank remains as a place of concealment amid the wide green spaces, and, in summer, the long grass under the trees.

What did we just read? The description of an enchanted refuge, or—because this park is inhabited by both the homeless and the killer impaling them on the park's spiked fence—something more sinister? And why can't it be both?

In Rendell's books, life is both sinister and ordinary. Rendell often turned to a quote from one of her favorite writers, Arnold Bennett, to describe her work: "Humanity treads ever on a thin crust over terrific abysses." The ground is ready to give way in most of Rendell's work. Her recognition of the thin, wavering line between the evil and the quotidian may explain the ease with which she stepped into the criminal mind. The contrast between the placid surface and the roiling substrata of derangement, a rebuke to the fetishized mastermind serial killers of contemporary popular imagination, is the very thing that makes her books so unnerving. And the ordinary characters in her novels, people as bound by their secrets as Marley's ghost is by his chains, are no strangers to obsession, or to the way obsession can take over a life, as with the timid young woman who is the title character of *The Bridesmaid* (1989).

Some years ago, a friend told me, quite seriously, not to read *The Bridesmaid* in bed at night. Being a know-it-all, I didn't listen, and found myself thoroughly terrified. Not even hearing my then-wife sleeping soundly beside me alleviated my fear. About a year later, a friend to whom I had given the book called me on a Saturday afternoon in early summer. She was on vacation in Los Angeles. It was a beautiful day, and she had promised her host she'd join her for a walk as soon as she finished reading *The Bridesmaid*. But now she was calling to tell me that, in spite of the warmth and sunshine, she was completely spooked. We had both fallen prey to Rendell's mastery of the tires-on-ice moment: when a novel's intersecting elements begin their inexorable slide into calamity.

The non-Wexford novels, the stand-alones, are black comedies about the public

consequences of private deceptions caused by the crossed wires and mixed signals that connect characters to each other. None are more mismatched than the victims and killer in *A Judgement in Stone* (1977), which begins with the sentence: "Eunice Parchman killed the Coverdale family because she could not read or write." Val McDermid has pointed out that the sentence is a riposte to those who believe all crime fiction is formulaic, revealing in the first sentence the identity of the killer, the victims, and the motive. *A Judgement in Stone* is about an illiterate housekeeper whose secret is found out by the bourgeois family she works for. Their efforts to educate her, their assurances she needn't be ashamed, only make her feel more of an outsider, more of a freak in their world, which takes literacy for granted. The novel is a cunning and malevolent prank played upon the reader. We go along, enjoying Rendell's wit, the ingenious plotting, the swift delineation of character—and suddenly we realize that the thing allowing us to take such pleasure, our literacy, is the very thing that gets the family in the novel killed. (The book was the inspiration for Claude Chabrol's film *La Cérémonie*.)

Rendell's is a sensibility that encompasses both the Gothic and the sick joke. The morbid romanticism that defines the climax of *The Bridesmaid* (which Chabrol filmed) would have made Emily Brontë laugh in sheer admiration. And the rapturousness of the novels that Rendell wrote under the pseudonym Barbara Vine, with *King Solomon's Carpet* (a love letter to London written in arsenic and laudanum) and *No Night Is Too Long* (which may be the closest thing we have to a gay *Wuthering Heights*) counting among the best of them, have the ominous, night-blooming strangeness of 19th-century Gothic novels.

There is, as in many Gothic novels, an old house at the center of *Dark Corners*, Rendell's last novel. The protagonist, Carl Martin, is a blocked novelist who inherits a house from his father in a rapidly gentrifying London neighborhood. Deciding that renting out some of the rooms will earn him the income he needs while he wrestles with his second novel, Carl impetuously takes a creep named Dermot McKinnon as his tenant. Dermot gets hold of some incriminating information about his new landlord. Carl, morally though not legally guilty and too frightened to go to the police, accedes to Dermot's blackmail, letting him live in the rooms rent-free as Dermot gradually takes over more and more of the house.

The coldness that alienates some readers from Rendell is also what makes those of us who enjoy her indulge in grim laughter

at the plight of her characters. The only assurance that Rendell offers her readers is that no matter how uncomfortable a situation her protagonists find themselves in, it will always get worse. When circumstances remove Dermot from the picture and Carl at last feels free, Dermot's dim girlfriend Sybil simply takes over the blackmail scheme and becomes Carl's new unwanted tenant. It's the blitheness of the perfidy here, the ease with which Dermot and Sybil slip into criminality, that Rendell holds up to cool assessment. At the same time, it's Carl's pampered nature, his shock that there is such deviousness in the world, that makes him such a patsy.

The novel's secondary characters have the particular Rendell characteristic of being both odd and ordinary at the same time. There's a freeloading woman who moves into a dead friend's apartment, taking over the place, wearing the friend's stylish clothes as though it were all her due; an older man who finds that his only pleasure in retirement is taking bus trips to sections of London and the surrounding country he has never visited—not to actually get off the bus, just to take the rides. These two characters are not gracefully integrated into the novel; they're slivers of Rendell's sensibility but not fully working parts of her schematics. The book doesn't stand with the horror of *The Bridesmaid* or *A Judgement in Stone*, or the strange dark-hued enchantment of *The Keys to the Street*, or the sick-joke whammy of *A Sight for Sore Eyes*. But it's hardly a falling off. There never was a falling off in Rendell's work, which instead displays a growing acuity of psychological perception and authority to her moral vision. Rendell's work habits were reliable: She produced a novel a year, sometimes more. The weight of her achievement lies less in individual volumes than in the body of her work, just as the pleasure of reading it comes from encountering that deepening sensibility in book after book.

Those who have never read a book by Rendell should feel free to start anywhere. Her detective series needn't be read in order. Mary McCarthy, in the particular way she had of blending praise and derision, once wrote of the novels of Ivy Compton-Burnett: "A Compton-Burnett is a reliable make, as typical of British Isles workmanship as a tweed or a Tiptree or an Agatha Christie." (Wexford relaxes with a Compton-Burnett in the final scene of *The Monster in the Box*.) We are used to critics writing this way of popular novelists, but not of the ones who have been

deemed literary. Rendell was both, and one of the major English novelists of the last half of the 20th century. In her essay on Compton-Burnett, McCarthy goes on to say something that neatly disposes of the tendency to look down on writers simply because they work in a particular genre. "Detection," she writes, "seems to be natural to the English novel; this is true even in Jane Austen where a Wickham or a Frank Churchill is 'found out.' The traditional English novel, from Fielding on, deals in lost-and-found identities, concealment and discovery. Unlike the continental novel (or the American), it is a kind of commodity with a warranty of unfailing reader-interest contained in the plot, which works like a factory mechanism—the mills of the gods."

It may be odd to talk about a writer who identified herself as a liberal (made Baroness Rendell of Babergh in 1997, she sat for Labour in the House of Lords) as a traditionalist, but in some essential way Rendell was one. Of all the changes in society that her books recorded, it was women coming to have more freedom and self-definition that pleased her the most. Some of the most withering passages in *Dark Corners* link the old-school view of women as housekeepers and mothers to the tea-cozy insularity of English provincialism, and find the dank odor of a Sunday dinner's boiled vegetables rising from both. But the changing makeup of the English populace and the ability of formerly marginalized people to have more of a say in their lives did not, for Rendell, much change morality.

Over the last few years, the thoroughly overexposed critic Slavoj Žižek has said that liberals are particularly ill equipped to stand up for liberalism. Whatever he was thinking of, Rendell stands as a magnificent exception. She remains a particular delight for readers who don't seek false comfort, who don't confuse compassion with sappiness, who don't believe good intentions are more important than results, who don't believe people are ever fully free of vanity, and who so often find human beings appalling because, to the writer, the work of being a decent human being is sacred. That Rendell sustained this vision while writing superbly in several genres—the detective story, the Gothic novel, the black comedy of manners—is another sign of her commitment to tradition. Rarely does a novelist express an ever-deepening but consistent psychological and moral vision over so many years. Rarely does a vision that could feel so grim in what it apprehended seem such a sign of the persistence of hard-headed decency. ■

SHELF LIFE

by AARON THIER

ON THE EDGE (NEW DIRECTIONS; PAPER \$16.95) is only the second of Rafael Chirbes's many novels to be translated into English, and the first since *Mimoun* in 1993. Chirbes, who died last August, was one of the leading lights of contemporary Spanish literature, but if *On the Edge* is the most palatable of his works, then it's easy to understand the hesitation to translate them.

The narrative consists almost entirely of a rambling, discursive monologue delivered by a 70-year-old carpenter, soon to be an ex-carpenter, named Esteban. He lives in the town of Olba, near Spain's Mediterranean coast, with his mute, ancient father, and he's just lost his business and all of his property in an idiotic investment. As he explains: "I have adorned my old age with bankruptcy, a little twist of angostura bitters to spice up my last drink." Other voices—mostly those of the employees he's had to lay off—make up a kind of chorus, but they're often indistinguishable from one another and tend to be as despairing as Esteban himself. Everyone is having the same problem: The boom years are over, Spain is in economic free fall, and the survivors stagger about in the ruins, berate one another, and lament their ill fortune. Their brief prosperity was an illusion, says one of Esteban's friends: "Spain...is still the Africa that begins at the Pyrenees."

Money, greed, business, whatever—capitalism comes in for a lot of justifiable criticism in the novel. "Economics in its purest form," Esteban muses, is about "how to stick the knife in the pig's gullet so that it makes as little fuss as possible when it dies." Or else: "Being spotted haggling with a whore by the roadside means being accepted as a companion in the last circle of hell, a being unable to control his lust—or, far worse, a wretch unable to control his

money." But this trouble with money is for Esteban just a symptom of the deeper evil. Something is wrong with the world. And something is wrong with him, too, as he's perfectly willing to acknowledge. He complains that everyone these days is "keen to denounce anyone committing some offense, however minor," but he's singularly unable to imagine an alternative. His notion of community consists of the freedom "to ask a neighbor to lend him his van to transport the body of a dead horse or dog."

Nothing is good. Nothing is tolerable. And nothing escapes Esteban's rancorous

after it's been violated." But why should it be otherwise? We live in "a world that's constantly changing and constantly growing more corrupt." "Today is worse than yesterday, but better than tomorrow." Man is just "a factory for shit in various stages of preparation," he declares. "Every human being is guilty as charged."

Occasionally the rant skews comic, and at precious few moments it recalls the anguished hilarity of Samuel Beckett or Thomas Bernhard. "Sometimes," Esteban laments, "with old men, our feet turn gangrenous and have to be amputated." There

is the same faint air of allegory as well. Esteban's father sits in the house, mute and recriminatory and unforgiving—impossible to ignore, impossible to live with, a breathing, defecating reminder of the Spanish Civil War and the Franco dictatorship, which ruined his life. Esteban himself is a figure for modern Spain—the boss whose employees hate him for laying them off, but who is himself bankrupt and miserable. And the whole catastrophe, financial and spiritual, is somehow manifest in the nearby lagoon to which they all seem irresistibly drawn. (The "edge" of the title is *orilla* in Spanish, the "shore": not a firm boundary line but a liminal space—a zone of indecision.) It's in this place, literally and metaphorically, that Esteban's life has unfolded; he's been on the margins of things. It's where he played as a boy. It's where his uncle taught him to fish, a memory that inspires an upsetting digression about bait. It's where he brought his only real girlfriend, long ago, and where he now brings prostitutes. It's where he imagines killing his father and committing suicide. And it's not only Esteban who haunts the lagoon. This is where resistance fighters hid for years during and after

the war. So the lagoon is Spain, too, or the crisis of Spain's modern history—not a cliff from which you plunge to your death, but a soft wallow into which you sink forever.

Is *On the Edge* worth reading? Certainly it gives no pleasure. But it does seem to operate like a psychological health tonic. It has to be swallowed to take effect, it's corrosive going down, you wonder if he had to add quite so much vinegar and horseradish, but afterward the effect is invigorating. Life might be bad, but you're not Esteban, thank God. And, at the very least, you're no longer reading *On the Edge*. ■



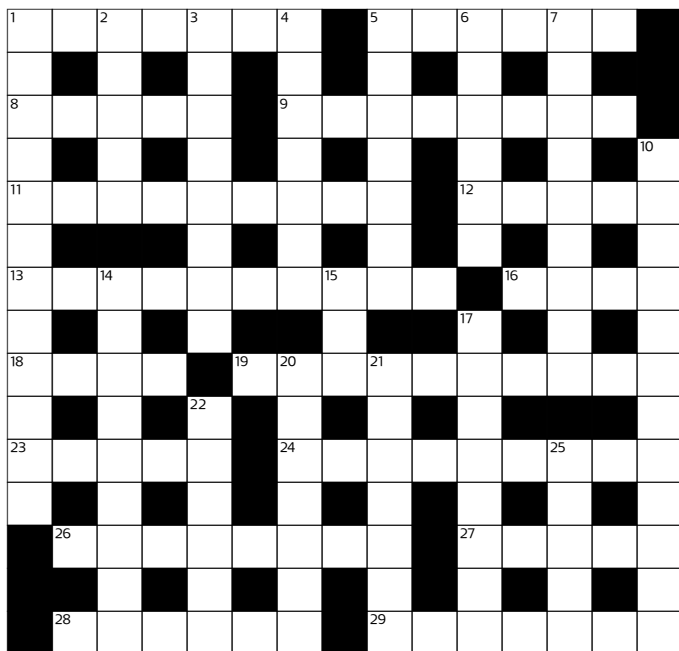
Rafael Chirbes

attention. Old people jogging have chosen to "risk their lives—which are, after all, already lost and, for the most part, wasted." The Styrofoam tray in which meat is packaged at the supermarket is "the small coffin of something that died a violent death." Telephone numbers and e-mail addresses are "the cat-flaps through which modern-day intruders creep." Love is often just a matter of "possessing that flesh, defending it from other men's desires." And don't get him started on the Mediterranean: "[My] sense now is that it's impregnated by the kind of sticky muck that remains in a body

Aaron Thier's second novel, *Mr. Eternity*, will be published in August.

Puzzle No. 3392

JOSHUA KOSMAN AND HENRI PICCIOTTO



ACROSS

- 1 Like the Sabbath day, happening in silence (7)
- 5 Representative sample of small timepiece (6)
- 8 Proprietor of regressive gambling center admitting women (5)
- 9 This gal plays music for law enforcers (8)
- 11 Conductor to read in Icelandic, initially (9)
- 12 Tears apart flower (5)
- 13 Old king with an afterthought in convoluted yarn: It could put you to sleep (10)
- 16 Italian's three-kilometer journey (4)
- 18 Hose box (4)
- 19 Like a carriage, perhaps... but wait, how did it hold the pencil? (5-5)
- 23 Mistreat and manipulate beaus (5)
- 24 Enrich returning official with connection involving Taylor (9)
- 26 Top of a tree containing salt (8)
- 27 Perform better with love notes (5)
- 28 Start to wrangle with senior metalworker (6)

- 29 Comfortably ensconced at the ballpark, the Cardinals filling requirement (7)

DOWN

- 1 Annie Oakley's heavenly body (8,4)
- 2 See 15
- 3 Storyteller's incoherent rant and roar (8)
- 4 Inn's peppery seasoning lacking a bit of thyme (7)
- 5 Type of secret agents covering European Community (7)
- 6 Creature's thin layer lifted (6)
- 7 Where to have a dinner party in, say, Dodge, Iowa (9)
- 10 Four-minute mile, four-minute mile, four-minute mile... (6,6)
- 14 Horribly evil curse and foul vice lures private into warped, cruel vise (9)
- 15 and 2 Nouveaux riches from an average planet (8)
- 17 They give you guidance for keeping the glare off of television commercials? (8)
- 20 Policeman's bid to smuggle integrated circuit (7)
- 21 Doctor's child repressing desire (7)
- 22 Trotsky: 1D or 1D? (6)
- 25 Saint Elizabeth conceals information (5)

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 3391

ACROSS 1 NT + RAN + CE 9 "two cans"

10 N + AT + URAL 11 & 24 RED + ONE

12 AHA + S + SEE 13 anag. (&lit.) 15 2 defs.

17 "wrist" 19 ST(R)EAMERS 22 LA(TIN)G

26 IM + P + EACH 27 rev. hidden

28 T(AKEOUTC)OFFEE (OK, acute anag.)

DOWN 1 hidden 2 AS + UNDER

3 DI(ALTO)NE 4 NASA + L

5 RE(N + TALC)AR 6 NO(TBA)D

7 hidden 8 phonetic hidden 13 A(U +

REVO)IR (over rev.) 14 [pi/MU]-STACHIO

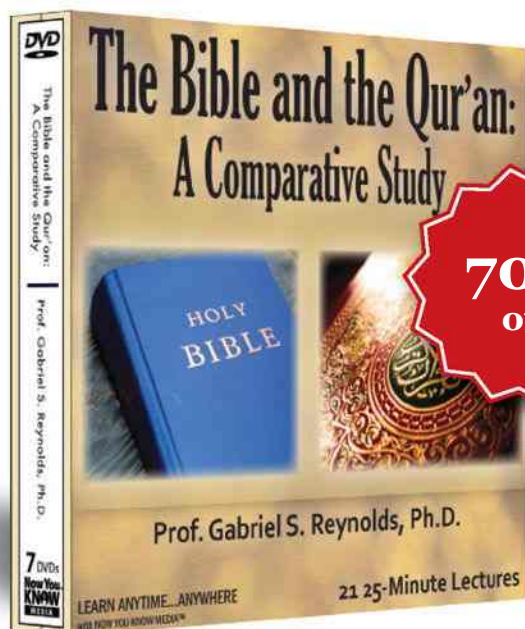
16 KA(NGARO)O (groan anag., oak rev.)

18 TENS (anag.) + POT 20 anag.

21 HIJ(AC)K 23 anag. 25 init. letters



Kosman & Picciotto explain what they're up to at TheNation.com/article/solving-nations-cryptic-crosswords/.



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